

West Africa

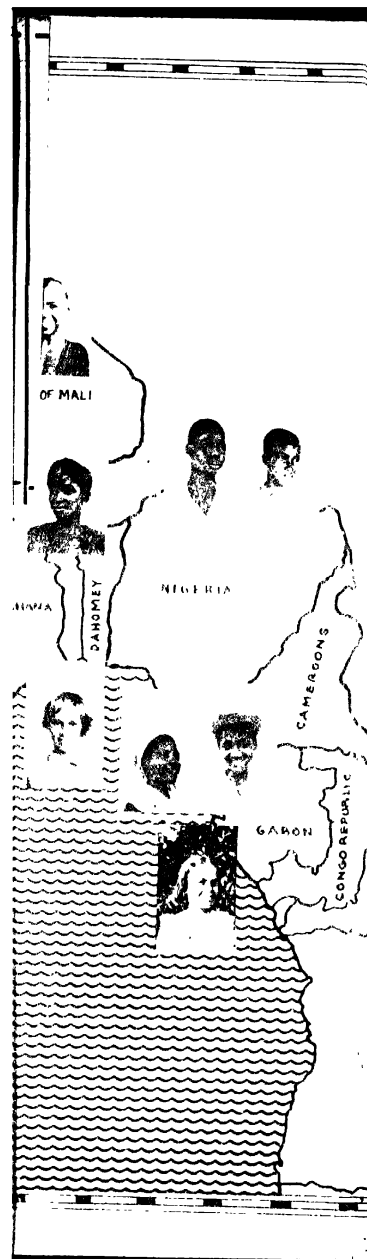


Charles R. Joy

TWENTY YEARS from now who will lead the nations and guide the destiny of the world? In these explosive times, it is increasingly essential that young people understand their contemporaries in other parts of the world.

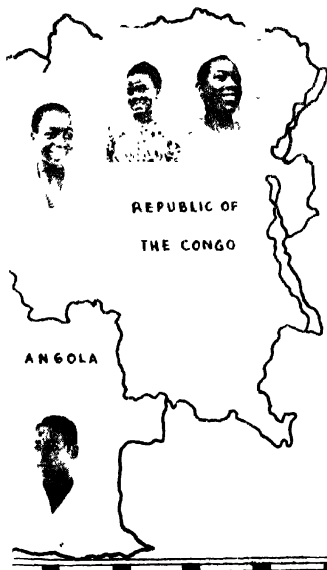
Charles R. Joy's approach to an understanding of everyday life in other lands is original, informative, and fascinating. Following the west coast of Africa from the Canary Islands and Senegal in the north, through Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Dahomey, Nigeria, the Cameroons, the Gabon, to the troubled Congo and Angola, Mr. Joy allows young people of these lands to describe themselves and their countries in their own words. Intimate and informal, their narratives dramatize their customs and beliefs, the lives they lead today, and their dreams of the Africa they will help to shape in the future.

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YOUNG PEOPLE OF WEST AFRICA

Also by CHARLES R. JOY

YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN

YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

YOUNG PEOPLE OF EAST ASIA

*Young People of
West Africa*

THEIR STORIES IN THEIR OWN WORDS

CHARLES R. JOY

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FOREWORD

In the first book of this series young people around the shores of the eastern Mediterranean told us how they lived. In the second book young people of the western Mediterranean introduced themselves to us. We have already become acquainted, therefore, with young people in every country of North Africa from Morocco to Egypt. This is Mediterranean Africa.

There remains, however, all of Africa south of the lands along the shores of the Inland Sea. In the present book we continue our study of this huge continent by visiting the countries on the west coast of Africa all the way from the Spanish lands in the north to the Portuguese province of Angola in the south.

Another book in our series will complete our survey of the continent by taking us through East Africa from the ancient land of Egypt down to the new Republic of South Africa.

As we sail along these shores in the wake of the old caravels, as we follow the course of the rivers and tramp the jungle trails with the daring explorers of the interior, we too shall be discoverers. In the young people we come to know we shall discover the Africa of the present, and with them we shall dream of the Africa of the future, the Africa these boys and girls will help to shape.

1. WEST AFRICA

The Question Mark

ON the map Africa looks a bit like a question mark. Up in the northwest a great hump, or bulge, sticks out into the Atlantic between the Mediterranean Sea and the Gulf of Guinea. That is the curve at the top of the question mark. Below this bulge the western coast line of the big continent (it is the second largest in the world) runs straight south from the equator to the Cape of Good Hope. The question mark is now complete.

Africa not only looks like a question mark, from the very beginning it has been a question mark. It put many questions to the ancient world, but nobody knew the answers to them. Even in the Middle Ages, Africa, which was well known in the north, disappeared in the south under black clouds of ignorance. No one knew what lay beneath them.

People who drew maps in those days left great blank spaces on them everywhere. Sometimes they added queer inscriptions like these: 'Here be dragons!' 'Here be demons!' 'Here be savages that worship devils!'

Today, after long centuries of courageous and costly adventuring, we have almost completed our exploration of the continent. We know how the shores run, where the mountains rise, where the rivers flow. We know something about the people and the manner of their life. We see the tribes becoming nations and the nations becoming free. But these nations are putting more questions to the world.

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'What are you going to do about us?' they ask. 'What of our future?' And we do not know the answers yet. The question mark still stands there to challenge us.

Africa Faces Westward

If you forget for a moment the question mark and look once more at the map, you will see that western Africa also looks like a big head set on a long neck. The Kingdom of Morocco is the forehead and the tiny Spanish possession of Ifni is the eye that looks over the water to the Canary Islands of Spain. Spanish West Africa is the nose. It's rather flat for a nose, but African noses are usually flat. The new Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the new Republic of Senegal run from the nose to the mouth. The upper lip is the British Colony and Protectorate of Gambia. The lower lip is the province of Portuguese Guinea. Between the lips a part of Senegal sticks out like a tongue. The new, independent republics of Guinea and Sierra Leone and the older Republic of Liberia form the chin, with the point of it in Liberia. Then comes the underchin: the Republic of the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togoland, Dahomey, and the Federation of Nigeria. At the British and French Cameroons the head joins the neck, and the Spanish island of Fernando Po lies just off the shore like a collar button. The Republic of the Gabon is the Adam's apple. The rest of the neck is formed by the former French Republic of the Congo, the former Belgian Republic of the Congo, and the Portuguese province of Angola. This is as far as the present book goes.

Perhaps, when you think of the different features of this face and neck, you'll remember where the countries are that we are about to visit.

West Africa in our Lives

You may ask why young people should be interested in West Africa. Here are a few of the reasons.

WEST AFRICA

In recent years, several of the West African countries which were once colonies of Great Britain, have gained their independence. But the British Government played an important part in preparing them for independence and is continuing to give them help so that they will become strong and prosperous.

We are constantly indebted to West Africa, though we may not know it. When you wash your face you may be using soap made of palm oil from Africa. The cocoa you drink may have come from Ghana, as well as the chocolate bar you nibble.

West Africa has been and still is important to us in these and many other ways. So you'll enjoy your voyage of discovery in these lands across the ocean. But before you start on your journey, you will want to know the story of the daring men who first found these lands.

Necho and Hanno

An old pharaoh of Egypt named Necho, who reigned about six hundred years before Christ, wanted to know what lay beyond the Red Sea. We are told that he sent out a fleet of Phoenician ships to find out. They were gone for three years and when they came back the men claimed they had sailed all around Africa. They said they had stopped at different places along the shore to grow corn for food. Was this tale true? We do not know. Of course, it is possible. The story is told by the greatest traveller of ancient times, Herodotus, the 'Father of History'.

Herodotus, however, never seems to have heard of another great navigator, who certainly went sailing through the Pillars of Hercules, as the ancients called the Strait of Gibraltar. He took his ships down along the African coast almost to the point of the chin. It was about 500 B.C.

Hanno came from the great city of Carthage in what is now the country of Tunisia. It was an enormous expedition that he led. He had sixty ships, and the ships were jammed

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with people, thirty thousand of them, men and women, carpenters and blacksmiths, musicians and dancers, all kinds of people. Hanno, you see, was setting out to found colonies. At the Pillars of Hercules he turned the prows of his ships to the south. Wherever he found what seemed to him a good place he set some of the people ashore and started a city. He seems to have founded seven cities on the coast of Morocco. Then he travelled on, probably as far as Sierra Leone. There his food began to fail and he turned for home.

Hanno wrote an account of his voyage in a very small book called the *Periplus*. The word comes from the Greek, and means 'a voyage around something'. It is very probable that this voyage was actually made, though nobody knows what happened to the towns that Hanno founded.

For two thousand years no one else of whom we know sailed along these shores.

Perils of the Sea

It took courage in those days to venture into strange lands and out on strange waters. The darkness that covered these regions was filled with horrors. On land the dragons and demons and devilworshipping savages roamed. People said there were men with dog's heads, men with no heads at all but with faces in the middle of their chests, men with but a single eye. There were snakes big enough to swallow bulls, spiders as big as kittens, scorpions as big as lobsters. At sea men faced other perils. Violent tempests tossed the tiny ships about like feathers. There were boiling waters, sheets of flame. There were whales and giant sea serpents, and other terrible monsters. Finally there was the rim of the world that no one had yet reached, over which ships would slip down to their destruction.

Henry the Navigator

Prince Henry was the son of King John of Portugal. He

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might have been a great general, but the only foe he wanted to fight was the unknown ocean. Down on the bleak, barren southwest corner of Portugal, where hardly a tree grew, but where the roar of the sea beating on the perpendicular cliffs could always be heard, he set up a school for the study of astronomy, mathematics, and navigation. He began to train sailors for Portugal and to send them seaward. Farther and ever farther he urged them on into the unknown. Prince Henry was dreaming of the wealth of India, which might be reached, he believed, by a new way around the southern tip of Africa. He was thinking of the heathen, too, who might be Christianized. Under his inspiration Portuguese ships sailed two thousand miles down the west coast of Africa. But when at last he died in his wave-washed home at Sagres in A.D. 1460, none of his sailors had seen the far end of the African continent.

Diogo Cão

Prince Henry died, but his ships sailed on. In 1462 they were at Sierra Leone, where Hanno had ended his famous voyage two thousand years earlier. In 1471 they crossed the equator, though they did not know it. On the headlands they reached they put up wooden crosses. By agreement with the Pope all the land now discovered was to belong to the little kingdom of Portugal. So Portugal claimed this 'Kingdom of the seas'.

It was not just strange coasts and strange seas they found. Over their heads at night spread a new heaven. The Pole Star sank farther and farther toward the horizon. Stars that none of these sailors had ever seen before shone in the southern skies.

In 1482 Diogo Cão set out on his first important voyage. We know nothing of his early life. We first hear of him when, as captain of a small ship in a fleet of four, he helped to capture a Spanish vessel in the Gulf of Guinea. The Spanish

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ship was trespassing in Portuguese waters. Then at last the king of Portugal sent him out to go 'as far to the south as he could'. He reached the mouth of the River Congo and set up another *padrão*, or pillar, there. The pillars were now of marble, not of wood. Then he continued for some distance south, to Cape Santa Maria on the southern shore of Angola.

Here Cão made a bad blunder. The shore swung far to the east here in a huge bay, and the navigator thought that he had reached at last the southern tip of Africa. So he went home to King John II and reported that he had seen the Indian Ocean. The exultant king proudly boasted of this great achievement.

It was not until his second voyage, which began towards the end of the summer of 1485, that Diogo Cão discovered his mistake. This time he sailed almost nine hundred miles farther south to erect his last *padrão* at Cape Cross in what is now South West Africa. The year was 1486, and there and then Diogo Cão disappears from the pages of history. We can only guess what happened to him. We never hear his name again. Did he die at Cape Cross while still determined to reach the end of the continent? Did he turn about and die on the way home? Did he reach Lisbon and then pass into obscurity because the king never forgave him for the blunder he had made at the end of his first voyage? No one has ever been able to answer these questions.

But this we do know. Diogo Cão was one of the world's greatest navigators. He discovered the Congo River and sailed two thousand miles farther south than any of the captains who preceded him. The glory of his name will never fade.

It was Bartolomeu Dias who finally reached the Cape of Good Hope, and Vasco da Gama who first reached India by this southern route. They, too, were great sailors, but the story of their exploits belongs in our next volume.

WEST AFRICA

Trading Posts, Forts, Missions, Colonies

The Portuguese were not just interested in drawing better maps of the world. They wanted the nutmeg and pepper and cinnamon and ginger that came from the Spice Islands in the East. They wanted Chinese silks and Indian jewels and perfumes. It was the love of gain that spurred them on. But when those early explorers brought back with them handfuls of gold dust from the West African coast there was great excitement in Lisbon. Here was wealth much nearer than India. So the Portuguese began to establish trading posts along the African shores. Then to protect these trading posts they built forts. Then the missionaries began to arrive, for Portugal was a very zealous Christian land. Finally, as the years went on, Portugal began to claim these lands for herself and establish colonies in them.

At first, Portugal had it all to herself, this west coast of Africa. But then other nations came: the French, the British, the Spaniards, the Belgians. They, too, staked out their claims. They found three kinds of gold to reward them: the yellow gold that first attracted them, the white gold of ivory, and the black gold of slaves. In the end the whole west coast of Africa belonged to some foreign land, with one exception. The people of America in the early nineteenth century had sent freed slaves to Liberia, and in 1847 this country had become an independent nation, the first Negro republic in Africa.

The Flags of Freedom

For many years the riches of the colonies poured into Europe. But other influences besides the love of gain were at work. Churches and schools were built. The natives of Africa were gradually lifted out of the savagery in which the explorers first found them. Colonialism led to a new dream of freedom, just as it did in America. Today we see nation after nation in Africa gaining its independence. From one end of the continent to the other new flags of freedom are flying.

And now we, too, go exploring.

2. THE CANARY ISLANDS

THE FORTUNATE ISLES

The Islands of the Blest

A very ancient legend told of wonderful islands that lay out in the Atlantic beyond the Pillars of Hercules. They were sometimes called the Islands of the Blest, sometimes the Fortunate Isles. Here after death, men said, the souls of the favoured were received by the gods, and on these islands they lived happily in paradise forever and ever. The great Greek poet Homer described them: 'There is no snow, nor winter, nor much rain, but the ocean is always sending up the shrill breathing breezes of Zephyrus to refresh men.' Zephyrus at that time was the name give to the gentle west wind.

The Sailor Saint of Ireland

The legend of this blessed place reached Ireland. It came to the ears of a lad named Brendan. He was born about A.D. 484 in County Kerry, which juts out into the ocean from the southwest corner of the land. The boy used to dream about these Isles of the Blest. When he grew up he became a monk, but his dream lived on. Finally he built a boat big enough to hold twenty men, and announced that he was going to that 'promised land of the saints'. Other monks asked to go with him. He agreed to take them—if they could row. At last they all set out for this fairy-tale land.

Far at sea on the Feast of St. Paul they sang the office

THE FORTUNATE ISLES

together, and from the depths of the ocean the fish rose and gambolled near the boat. At dawn on Easter Day they spied their first land, a small, round island, perfectly bare. It didn't look very attractive, but they were all eager to stretch their legs on dry land. So they went ashore, set up an altar, and celebrated the Easter Mass. Then they decided to cook an Easter breakfast. They built a fire and started to prepare the meal, when the island began to move under them. In great fear they scrambled back into their boat and the island sank to the bottom of the sea. It was a whale, of course, that hadn't minded the altar on his back but did object to having a fire built there.

We do not know exactly where St. Brendan went, and there are different tales about his long voyage. In some of these tales it is said that he found the place he was looking for, a lovely island where the sun was always warm, where there was fruit, and grain, and plenty of fish and meat to eat.

These stories about St. Brendan travelled all over Europe. The hero of them was called Brendan the Navigator.

The Canary Islands

It is possible that our sailor saint reached the Canary Islands, some sixty miles off the mainland of Africa, though there are no actual records to prove it. On some of the old maps the islands are clearly identified as the Fortunate Isles. Certainly there were many other visitors in the course of the years who found them beautiful. Possibly the Phoenicians touched there. They were very bold sailors. The Greeks, the Carthaginians, and the Romans landed on them, and the Arabs and the dark-skinned Africans. But they left no traces behind them.

Had these visitors written down the accounts of their experiences, they would certainly have told about the people they found. These people were called Guanche. They came from somewhere in the eastern Mediterranean about 3000

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to 2500 B.C. They were cave dwellers, who hewed their houses in the face of the steep cliffs, or dug them in the ground. They were brave fighters. Their young men used to have fun hurling javelins at each other, catching them, and throwing them back again.

In spite of the bravery of the Guanche, however, they were finally conquered by Spaniards from the court of the king of Castile. Thus from 1483 on the islands have belonged to Spain.

Thirteen is a Lucky Number

There are thirteen of these islands, but that number is not unlucky here. The biggest is Tenerife and all the ships that pass by know it well, for in the centre the islands' highest peak, El Teida, rises to the height of 12,262 feet. Off this island the British suffered two great defeats. In 1657 Admiral Robert Blake tried in vain to get the treasures brought there from America in Spanish galleons. In 1797 Admiral Horatio Nelson lost an arm trying to capture these islands from Spain.

Grand Canary is next in importance. Colombus stayed for a while at this beautiful island on three of his voyages to America. To sail by way of the Canaries was to take advantage of the favourable trade winds. Stopping there also gave the little fleet a chance to repair their ships, and to get firewood, fresh water, and food. Besides, Columbus seems to have fallen in love with Beatriz, the young and beautiful widow who ruled on the Canary island of Gomera.

Fuerteventura is the second of the islands in size. Because of the rich colours of its vegetation it is sometimes called the Painted Island. Then there is Lanzarote, which has more than three hundred volcanic craters on it. These craters and the black lava rock make the island in places look like a landscape on the moon. So the island is often called the Moon Island. People still talk about the volcanic eruption

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of 1730, which lasted for six years. Some scientists say that this was the most important eruption in volcanic history. The outbursts occurred in many places. People who went to bed at night might find their beds soaring into the sky before morning.

The Canaries are favourite holiday resorts. The islands are lovely, they are warmed by the Gulf Stream in the winter and cooled by the trade winds in the summer.

The Birds and the Dogs

Our loved canary birds are natives of these islands, but the islands did not get their name from the birds. On the contrary, the birds got their name from the islands. The name by which we now know the islands is very old, and it comes from the many wild dogs the early explorers found there. The Latin word for dog is *canis*. The descendants of these savage animals can still be found on Fuerteventura and elsewhere. They are called *bardinos*. They're still rather ferocious and make excellent watchdogs. The pure-bred ones always have four white paws.

Other African Spanish Possessions

Ifni, the eye that watches the Canaries from the mainland, is a minute country, mostly sand. Spanish West Africa, the nose on our African face, is much larger in size but also of small importance. The people on the coast live largely by fishing. The people of the interior, which is still almost unknown, are desert nomads, wandering about with their sheep.

The one other Spanish possession in West Africa is Spanish Guinea. Spanish Guinea has a mainland portion, called Río Muni, which lies between Gabon and the Cameroun, down on the Adam's apple of West Africa. Then there are a number of islands off the shore, the most important of which is our collar button, Fernando Po. This island has two high

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peaks, and from the capital of Santa Isabel the Spanish governor rules the whole colony.

We have asked a lovely and talented Spanish girl, Maria Marques Blay, to represent all these Spanish territories.

I AM AN ISLANDER

BY MARIA MARQUES BLAY

I Grew Up on a Beach

I WAS born at a clinic in Las Palmas on Grand Canary. Las Palmas is the capital of the Canary Islands. My earliest memories are of a beautiful beach, and I have always lived on a beach. Of course, there are many beaches on the Grand Canary and there is no time in the year when you can't go swimming. But the best of all the beaches is Las Canteras and that's where I live. The beach lies behind the Puerto de la Luz, which means the port of light. This is one of the most important ports in the Atlantic and thousands of ships come there every year. My beach has a promenade a mile long and it is protected by a bar with quiet water behind. It has lovely sand and people put up tents and umbrellas to shade them from the sun. On the best days it is crowded, but every day there are people there.

Even when I was very small I played there with other boys and girls. We made sand houses and played all kinds of games. It was great fun, and I grew up with the beach.

One thing, however, I remember that was not much fun. When I was about four I went out walking with my older sister and a bicycle hit me and knocked me down. I cut my head badly and had to have several stitches. But the thing I

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remember most was that after it had happened my sister was very much frightened and cried. So everybody gathered around her and tried to comfort her. Nobody paid much attention to me.

We have always lived on the first floor flat of a house facing the promenade and the beach. From our living room there is a lovely view over the water. We have seven rooms and a bath.

My Father is an Artist

My father is Juan Marques Penate. He is an architect, a painter, a sculptor, an interior decorator, and a manufacturer of furniture. He has exhibited his paintings in Paris and Germany. He met my mother when he was a student in Paris. Her name is Clara Blay de Marques, and she is French. My father, of course, is Spanish.

My own name is Maria Marques Blay, but the family calls me by the nickname of Maruchi. I am sixteen years old.

I have a brother Juan Luis, who is now twenty-eight. He got married two weeks ago. He was born in Paris, and so he is French like my mother. He had to serve two years in the French army. He works for my father.

My sister Germaine is twenty-three and she works for my father also. Just now she is staying with my aunt who lives on the island of Tenerife.

Mornings at School

I first went to school when I was five. This was the Colegio del Carmen close to my home. I was there for two years. Then I went to the Colegio Teresiano and I have been there ever since. Next year I shall finish my work there and then I expect to go to France to perfect my French. I may go to England also.

My school is some distance away from my house and I go in a bus. These buses are called *guaguas* and they run every

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fifteen minutes. They go from the Puerto to the centre of Las Palmas. The fare is only about a cent or a penny in English money. The buses that run into the country are called *piratas*. The places where the buses stop are all marked and are called *paradas*.

Every other day I get up at seven, because I have an early class in gymnastics at my school. The rest of the time I get up at eight. I always have what we call a *café completo*, which means coffee with milk, bread, butter, and jam. Then I start for school at seven-forty-five or eight-forty-five, and lessons last until one. There are four classes.

At one I go home and when the weather is fine I am always out on the beach until two, when I have my lunch. For lunch we have soup, fish or meat, fruit or a sweet. I'm very fond of sea food.

Things the Islanders Eat

The people of the islands eat many different kinds of food. Everybody, for instance, eats *gofio*, made of toasted corn, which is ground up, mixed with milk or water, and eaten as a stiff paste.

Sancocho is also typical. It is made of salt fish, white potatoes, and sweet potatoes (*boniatos*). They are all boiled together until they make a kind of mush. Then a hot sauce called *mojo* is added. This burns your throat all the way down.

One of the songs, or *isas*, on the island has these words:

'I have a knapsack of *gofio* here,

So that anyone who wants *gofio*

Must seek it of me.

'To be a good Canario

You must eat plenty of *gofio*

And scald your lips with the peppery sauce of
sancocho.'

The people eat *puchero*, too. This is fish with fried bananas, flowers from the wild artichoke, and other things.

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We have sweets called *raspaduras* made of honey and almonds, *bienmesabe* made of almonds and eggs, and *huevos moles* made of eggs and cream of almonds.

Afternoons at School

After lunch I go back to school, which for me lasts from three until five thirty. The other girls have a break in the afternoon, because they stay later than I do. I do not have any, because I leave early for a private lesson. So I go home, have something to eat, and then take a *guagua* for a fifteen-minute ride into the centre of the city. My teacher lives near the cathedral. He is a Spaniard and the lessons are from seven to eight on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. I get home from my lesson at eight-thirty, take a bath, and have supper at nine. This is a light meal, eggs or fish. After supper I do my homework and go to bed at ten-thirty.

Near the cathedral in Las Palmas is the Casa de Colon, the house where Christopher Columbus stayed when he was on his way to discover the new world. In the Casa de Colon is the well where he drank and the little altar where he worshipped. The house is now a museum.

Last year I took many subjects in school, but this year only a few: French, Latin, Greek, science (botany, mineralogy, and zoology), sewing, home economics, and art. I had a major choice to make between mathematics and languages, and I chose languages. I have studied ballet in a private school.

I like my languages and art best and someday I want to be an artist like my father.

At school I wear a uniform, which consists of a white blouse and a brown dress. I play *ballon balea*, which is like volleyball. I belong to a school group called Cruzada Misional de Estudiantes de España. This means the Crusading Mission of Spanish Students.

We have school on Saturday, but no school on Thursday

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afternoon, when I go to the cinema or visit my friends. On Sunday I get up late, usually at nine o'clock, and at ten I go to mass, for I am a Catholic. I may go to the cinema again in the afternoon, or read, or visit friends, or go on picnics. I have just been to see the Vienna Circus, which is now in town. It was an ice show and the skating was marvellous.

A Farm in a Crater

My father has a car, and I have been all around the island. Down in the south at Maspalomas there are sand dunes just like those in the Sahara Desert. But the most interesting thing to see is the old volcano at Bandama. The crater is more than a thousand yards in diameter and about a thousand feet deep. Down in the bottom of it is a big farm where a farmer grows bananas and vegetables and breeds horses and cows. It is said to be the only crater in the world that is inhabited.

We have a three-month vacation in the summer and the family goes to a little village in the centre of the island called Madronal. It is high and cool there. I have a very good time with the boys and girls. We go on excursions, and we sing and dance.

Five years ago I went to France for a month, travelling to many parts of the country. Except for that I have been out of Gran Canaria only once, when I went to Tenerife.

Island Fiestas

We have many interesting *fiestas* on the island. January 6 is the Day of the Kings, which is really a kind of Christmas celebration. The evening of the fifth there is a *cabalgata*, or cavalcade, with many floats. The people dress up in fancy costumes, and, of course, there are the three kings riding on camels. We have many camels in the islands.

On Good Friday there is a religious *fiesta*, when there are more *pasos*, or floats, with the figures of Christ, the Virgin,

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crosses, banners, and so on. It is called the Procession of the Mantillas, because the women cover their heads with white cotton scarves, which are called *mantillas*.

The first Sunday after Trinity Sunday is the fiesta of Corpus Christi. Some of the streets are covered with flower petals, arranged to make lovely Oriental rug patterns.

There is a naval festival on October 12, when the statue of the Virgin is put into a boat and makes a tour of the harbour. Many other boats follow, all blowing their whistles and tooting their horns. Finally the Virgin is brought ashore and taken back to her church.

Canary Wrestling

The only other thing I should like to tell you about is our Canary wrestling. This comes down from the early days before the Spaniards were here. The wrestlers form teams of ten men each. They wear white cotton blouses and coarse, strong trousers rolled high above the knees. The two opponents meet and shake hands. Then they grip each other's rolled trousers with their left hands, put their right hands together palm to palm, and lower them until their finger tips touch the ground. Then at once each tries to throw the other to the earth by lifting or twisting, always holding on to the roll of the trousers. If any part of the body touches the ground besides the feet, it is a defeat. The contestants then go around the ring and people make voluntary offerings. It is the only pay the wrestlers get.

I hope you can all come to see my island, for it is very beautiful and very interesting. So I will say *Ojalá*, which means, 'God grant it'.

3. SENEGAL

THE PEANUT COUNTRY

The River of Gold

ALL the early explorers who sailed out of the Pillars of Hercules and down the west coast of Africa knew the country we now call Senegal, for this was the most westerly part of Africa. The old Carthaginian navigator Hanno must have seen the Senegal River, though he probably called it the Chretes or the Chremetes.

In those days there were all kinds of legends about this ocean and the shores it washed. One of the most persistent was the report of a 'River of Gold'. The legend did not say that the river itself was of liquid gold, but simply that it rose in a land where gold was so plentiful that the people shovelled it around like so much dirt. The dogs wore golden collars. The king's palace had a golden roof, and the king tied his horse to a golden hitching post.

The early conqueror of the Canary island of Lanzarote, who claimed it for Spain about 1402, was Juan de Béthencourt. After he had occupied the island he began to look about for other adventures. He determined, he wrote, 'with the help of God . . . to open the road to the River of Gold'. We do not know whether he ever made the effort to realize this dream. But in those days everybody in Europe got excited when gold was mentioned.

THE PEANUT COUNTRY

Prince Henry's Captains

When Henry the Navigator first began to send his captains southward their first objective was to pass Cape Bojador in what is now Spanish West Africa. After they had rounded that point, he continued to urge his men to go still farther south. One of them, Diniz Dias, entered the mouth of the Senegal River about 1445. He thought it was a branch of the famous River Nile. Europe knew almost nothing in those days about the interior of Africa.

In 1454 a Venetian navigator appeared on the scene. He had sailed all over the Mediterranean. He was caught in a storm off Cape Vincent. This was the southwestern corner of Portugal, and of the whole continent of Europe. Near Cape St. Vincent was the town where Prince Henry lived and worked. The Venetian sailor took refuge there and began to hear so much about the prince and his great explorations that he eagerly offered his services. He was twenty-one, full of enthusiasm for new deeds of daring. So it happened that it was an Italian and not a Portuguese that carried Prince Henry's flag still farther to the south. His name was Luigi Cadamosto.

In 1455 Cadamosto reached the Canaries, and then sailed on to the white headland of Cape Blanco just south of Spanish West Africa, on the shore of what is now the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. Here he found natives whom he described as being 'black as moles, dressed in white flowing robes with turbans wound around their heads'. There were people with lighter skins, also Arab traders from the interior, with their slaves and camels. The camels had packs of brass and silver and gold on their backs.

Beyond Cape Blanco the shores were flat and sandy. This was the edge of the great Sahara Desert. Cadamosto sailed on for almost four hundred more miles before he reached the Senegal River. The natives all along this coast were amazed at the ships. Some of them thought they were big

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birds with white wings. Others, seeing the sails furled, decided that the ships were queer fishes. The people marvelled also at the skin of the explorers. They even tried to wash the white dirt off.

The Senegal River flows between the two modern countries of Mauritania and Senegal. Cadamosto left his ships at the mouth of the river and set off by land for a march of two hundred and fifty miles up the river. Then he spread out the cloth he had brought with him and exchanged it for gold. It probably was a very profitable market for the young Italian captain in the service of the Portuguese prince. Possibly the Senegal was the old River of Gold.

Returning to the coast, the party boarded their ships again and sailed south once more as far as Cape Verde. Cadamosto wrote that the land there was 'all low and full of fine, large trees, which are continually green.' 'The trees never wither like those in Europe,' he said. This was why the cape was called the Green Cape. *Verde* is a Portuguese word that means 'green'. Cadamosto thought the coast here was most beautiful. 'Many countries have I been in, to west and east, but never did I see a prettier sight.'

Beyond this cape, however, the natives were very unfriendly. They shot at the Portuguese sailors with poisoned arrows. Moreover, there did not seem to be any more gold. The ships reached the Gambia River and then turned about. But Cadamosto had gone farther south than any other man of his day.

Factories

For one thousand miles north of the Senegal River no other stream reached the sea. This was the domain of the Sahara Desert, as we have already seen. There was no gold to be had there, and very little else. But the region from the mouth of the Senegal to Cape Verde was a promising bit of coast. So the traders came and established themselves there.

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They built their factories on the little island of Gorée in the harbour of what is now the big city of Dakar, at a place called Rufisque, a little town to the north, and in other places. The factories were not what we mean by factories. A factor was the agent of a trading company, and a factory was just his store, his trading post. At the beginning the factors were, of course, all Portuguese, but later on the English came and set up their factories also. One of them was at St. Louis on the Senegal River, which later became the capital of Senegal. This was in 1659. They acquired the island of Gorée from the Portuguese in 1677. Later the French came, and finally in 1814 French possession of the whole country was internationally recognized.

This did not mean much at that time, however, for until the middle of the nineteenth century the French held little of the country except a narrow strip of land along the coast and the town of St. Louis.

The African Napoleon

In 1854 General Louis Léon César Faidherbe was sent out to Senegal as the governor. He was an able soldier, but he was also an active dreamer. He dreamed of a great French African empire stretching all the way across the continent from Senegal in the west to the Red Sea in the east. Faidherbe was an energetic man and there was little for him to do in St. Louis. He soon became bored. So he started to build this empire he dreamed about, though he had only some three battalions of troops under his command. His motto was 'Peace or powder.' Most of the tribes chose peace. He made treaties with them and added four hundred thousand square miles to French territory. He extended his rule to the Gambia River in the south and to the Niger River in the east. Those who did not like him called him 'the Savage'. Those who admired him called him 'the African Napoleon'.

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The Island of Gorée

This small island, where the early traders set up their factories, had an important place in the history of America. The *Mayflower* arrived in Plymouth in 1620. But the year before another ship arrived in Jamestown, Virginia, with a cargo of slaves from Gorée. These slaves were brought down the Senegal River to the coast. They came from other parts of the interior also. Then they were herded together on the island of Gorée until the ships came to take them to America. You can still see on Gorée the dark pens where the slaves were chained before they were shipped away. Yankee skippers in those days loaded their ships with rum for Africa, brought slaves to the West Indies and the American Southern states, and sailed back to New England with molasses and cotton. We shall hear more about slaves later in this book because the main centre of the trade was farther east in the Gulf of Guinea. Altogether some fifteen million slaves were taken to the Americas in this horrible traffic in human flesh.

French West Africa

From the time of the African Napoleon the French Empire on this continent grew rapidly. In the end French West Africa was half as large as the United States, twice as large as India. Eight territories were finally established there. They were Mauritania, Senegal, the French Sudan, the French Niger, Upper Volta, French Guinea, the Ivory Coast, and Dahomey. Each of these eight territories was ruled by a governor, who was responsible to a High Commissioner in the federal capital of Dakar.

French West Africa was the largest of all African countries. It had almost nineteen million people in it, and about one hundred and twenty different languages. It was a member of the French Union, which included all the overseas territories of France.

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Then in 1958 President Charles de Gaulle of France told these different African territories that they could vote for complete independence from France, or for membership in a new French Community. French Guinea voted for independence. All the rest of French West Africa voted to remain in the French Community. In that organization they were to have control over all their own local affairs.

Senegal Today

Senegal, the oldest and most important part of former French West Africa, is now a republic and a member of the French Community. It grows more peanuts than any other country in the world, though peanuts are called ground nuts in Africa. Senegal has large phosphate deposits also.

Dakar has the best harbour in West Africa, and is a rapidly growing city. To this city, as to a great magnet, many of the young people are drawn from all other parts of what was once French West Africa. Rohkayatou Sene came from the new Islamic Republic of Mauritania and she tells us how the herdsmen in the little desert town of Atar live. Hugues Prince came from the new Republic of Dahomey on the Gulf of Guinea. His father was from a royal family. These are the kind of young people who will help to build the new independent states of Africa.

I WAS BORN IN MAURITANIA

BY ROHKAYATOU SENE

Life in a Desert Town

Thirteen years ago I was born in Atar in what is now the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. Atar is a small place near

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the southwest corner of Spanish West Africa in the western Sahara Desert. It is almost six hundred miles north of Dakar where I now live.

There are about four thousand people living in and around Atar, but they are scattered in many different groups of houses. We had a hut of one room not far from the centre. The French call this kind of house a *case*. The walls were made of a kind of grass and the roof was thatched. There was one door, but no windows. The floor of our *case* was earth. At night we spread straw mats over it and slept there under some kind of light covering. The climate, of course, was hot. There was a box in the *case* where we kept our clothing, but that was the only furniture we had. We cooked on stones just outside the *case*. None of the *cases* of the village had any running water. We all had to go to the river to fetch it.

In the centre of the village was a huge open square where the markets were always held. Near the village were several oases that we called *palmeraies* from the palm trees in them. There are always palm trees in these oases.

Most of the people in Atar were herdsman and they had camels, goats, sheep, and cows. There was some vegetation around the town, so the people did not have to wander far to get fodder for their herds and flocks. My own father, however, was not a herdsman. He was a chauffeur and drove a car for a French family.

When I was Small

When I was very small I did not wear any clothing at all. The little boys and girls seldom wore any. When the boys got a little bigger they put on shorts. When the girls got bigger they put on cotton dresses. We all went barefoot. We used to have great fun racing and dancing. But when the boys and girls danced together they never touched each other. I also had to help my mother take care of the other children.

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My father's name was Diene Sene. He was born in another part of French West Africa, at Sine Saloum in Senegal, not far from the big city of Dakar.

My mother's name was Mine Side-Baba Hize, but she died when I was five or six years old. She was born in Atar and lived there all her life. I have a brother, Hibrahima who is seventeen and now goes to the same school I go to. I had a sister Rama, too, but she died when she was a month old. Now my father has married again. My stepmother's name is Fatou and I have three half brothers. Babacar is six and goes to school, Masse is four, and Massiga is three.

I started to go to school at Atar, but I only went for four months. I became sick and had to leave. I do not remember what was the matter with me.

When I came to Dakar

After my mother died my father decided to leave Atar. We moved to Thies, which is about an hour's drive north of Dakar. Then from Thies we finally moved to Dakar, where we now live in a European-style house of four rooms, all on the same floor.

I remember one day when we first came to Dakar going to see some men dancing. But when it was time to go home I had forgotten the way. I did not even know the name of my street. So I began to cry, and two women came up to me to find out why I was crying. When I told them, they decided to take me to their own home, but on the way I met my stepmother. So everything was all right again.

My School

At Dakar my father sent me to the École des Filles de Medina. This means the Girls' School of Medina. The Medina is the native part of the big city. I have been going to school there for six years now and I am in the sixth form. The lowest form is the first. Last year I received my *Certificat*

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d' Études. This is a kind of diploma that stated I had satisfactorily completed certain studies. School is compulsory until you get this certificate. After you get it you can leave if you want to. I do not want to. I want to go on to college, which is like a Grammar school.

I am studying arithmetic, grammar, vocabulary, geography, and writing.

I get up at seven-thirty and have my breakfast which consists of *couscous*. This is made of rice with meat and bananas, and eaten with a very hot sauce. I drink black, unsweetened coffee. I live near my school so it only takes me three minutes to walk there. School begins at eight and lasts until twelve. Then it starts again at two in the afternoon and lasts until six. There is a break at 10 a.m., when I eat some bread and sugar I have brought from home. I go back to my home for lunch at twelve-thirty when I have rice and fish, with bread and water. In the afternoon at school we study geography, we recite and have discussions, we sing and have stories.

After school I do my homework until seven-thirty, when we have meat and vegetables for supper but not dessert. Once again I have water to drink. After supper we have a wonderful time. My stepmother tells us old Senegalese stories about the animals, particularly about the animals that talk. I go to bed about nine o'clock.

My Life out of School

We have no school on Thursday, so in the morning I help my stepmother with her work, and in the afternoon I go out to play with the children. We play a handkerchief game we call *chadèle*. The children form a circle and someone on the outside runs around and drops a handkerchief behind someone standing in the ring. As soon as he sees the handkerchief lying behind him he has to chase the one that dropped it and catch him before he reaches the vacant space. If he

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does not catch him he has to take a place in the centre of the circle.

On Sunday I often go to the cinema in the morning and sometimes my father takes us for a drive in the afternoon. We usually drive into the centre of Dakar to see the big houses there.

We have a long four-month holiday in the summer, and then I go to a Moslem school to study the Koran. This school is held every day except Wednesday afternoon and Thursday and Friday mornings. Since I am a Moslem I say the prayers five times a day when I am at home, but we do not say them in school. I do not go to the mosque, for only adults go there.

I have never travelled much, but last summer I went to Thies for twelve days.

I should like to be a midwife when I grow up.

Senegalese Customs

Senegalese girls wear a two-piece dress. There is a wrap-around skirt that falls below the knees. Then there is an upper part that is like a small child's dress. The upper part has a tight waist cut very low front and back with two straps over the shoulders that are always falling down. To this waist is attached a short, full skirt that falls just below the hips.

We usually speak Wolof at home. This is a language many of the Senegalese use. If I wanted to say I was born in Atar it would sound like *Atar diankine la diodo*. And if I wanted to say my name is Rohkayatou, it would sound like *Rohkayatou la toude*. Of course, I speak French, too.

I WAS BORN IN DAHOMEY

BY HUGUES PRINCE

I belong to the Mina Tribe

People come to Dakar, which is the biggest city around here, from all the old French West African territories. Some come to get jobs. Others come to go to school. Still others just because they want to live for a time in the city. But they all love their old homes and in the end most of them go back to them.

I am like many others. I was born in Bohicon in the Dahomey and I belong to the Mina tribe. There are many of my people in Dahomey and they are found in Togoland also. Bohicon is a town of about two thousand people, a few miles from Cotonou and on the road to Porto Novo, the capital of Dahomey. I do not know how many people there are in my tribe, but there must be some hundreds of thousands of them. However, there are other tribes in southern Dahomey also, and there is no great difference among them. They all speak about the same language. I was born in Bohicon fifteen years ago.

The village of Bohicon is becoming quite modern and the houses are much like those in Cotonou. They have stucco walls and roofs of tile or corrugated iron. We had a large house, with more than ten rooms in it.

My Family is Scattered Now

Most of the people in Bohicon are in business, and my father, whose name is Alfred Prince, is a businessman. He

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has a bakery, and he also runs a farm. The farm is mostly for the family, but he does sell some of the things he grows. He has fruit trees, vegetables, peanuts, and palm trees (both oil palms and coconuts). My father was born in Togoland and he belongs to a royal family. The kings still exist in Togoland, but they don't have much authority now.

My mother is Elise. She was born in Togoland, too. She married my father there and then they came to the Dahomey.

I have four brothers and one sister. The oldest is my brother Nelson, who is about thirty-five, married, with five children. He is a teacher at Rufisque, which is twelve miles from Dakar. Leopold is thirty-three. He is doctor at Bangui on the Congo River in the Central African Republic. This used to be a part of the district of Oubangi-Shari in the former French Equatorial Africa. He is married and has two children. Then comes Pierre who is twenty-nine. He is a doctor, too, and practises in Dakar. Next comes my sister Eunice who is twenty-seven, married with two children. She works on a farm in the Republic of the Upper Volta at Bobo-Dioulasso. Steven is eighteen and is a student at the *lycée* in Dakar.

When I was five my father sent me to Dakar to get a better education, and I have been there ever since. All my brothers and sisters have now moved away from Bohicon, but my father and mother still remain there. At first I came to live with my brother Nelson and stayed with him until I was eleven. Then I went to live with my brother Pierre, where I am staying now. My brother Steven is also with us in the same house.

My Schools in Dakar

Dakar is at the southern end of the Cape Verde Peninsula. Just a few miles to the north is the Pointe des Almadies, which is the most westerly point in Africa. It is very sharp and rocky and there have been many wrecks there. My

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brother Pierre lives in the western part of the city in a new residential district called Point E. He works for the government in the department of public health, and he is responsible for mental and tubercular patients. He has a modern stucco house of five rooms with a garden of fruit trees and flowers.

When I first came to Dakar I went to the *école communale*, a state school near the house. I was there for six years before I entered the *lycée*. I have been at the *lycée* for about four years now and I am in the third form. The lowest form is called the sixth.

I am studying French, English, German, Latin, mathematics, science, history, geography, design, music, and gymnastics. I like mathematics least and languages best, perhaps because languages are easiest for me. I should like to be a teacher of languages. I speak Senegalese well now, which is the language of most of the Negroes here. I am beginning to forget my native Mina language.

All Through the Day

Every day I get up at 6 a.m. and have a *café complet* for breakfast. This is what most French people have. It consists of coffee with milk, bread with unsweetened butter and jam. It is about three miles to the *lycée* and I go there in a government bus. I am allowed to do this because my brother works for the government. But once a month I have to pay for the rides I have taken. School lasts from eight to twelve in the morning and from three to five in the afternoon. There is a morning break, but I seldom eat anything then. At noon the government car takes me back to my home and I have lunch, fish or meat, vegetables, and fruit or French *pâtisserie* (pastry). I drink water. I never drink wine except on special occasions.

After lunch I have a half-hour nap and then the car takes me back to school. I get there early, so I study my lessons

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outside or chat with my friends. One of my best friends is a white boy, the son of a French Protestant missionary in Dakar.

At five I return to the house in the car and do homework until eight. We have supper at eight or nine, a somewhat lighter meal than dinner, sometimes soup and sometimes eggs. I am very fond of chicken, and I like Senegalese rice and *couscous*. The former dish is made from rice and fish with a sauce. *Couscous* is made from millet, fish, mutton, chicken, and other things, and we always eat it with a very hot sauce.

After dinner I study for a while until ten-thirty or eleven-thirty, when I go to bed.

Games and Other Things

On Thursday there is no school. In the morning I do my homework. In the afternoon I play football or basketball. I am in the school basketball team and we play with other schools. We have a good team. In the evening I sometimes play indoor games like cards or draughts.

We have a maid to do the housework, so I have few chores to do, but sometimes I run errands.

Saturday morning we have school, but there is no school in the afternoon. Then I often go to the cinema, if there is a good film.

On Sunday we often drive out to spend the day with my brother Nelson, for Pierre has a car. Most of the people in Dakar are Moslems, but I am a Protestant and go to the Protestant Mission. This is a mission of the Reformed Church and I am supposed to be in a special class now to learn the catechism, but sometimes I miss it, and I do not always get to church. We often go on picnics to the Pointe des Almadies and other places.

In 1952 I went to France with my brother Nelson. We travelled to Casablanca in Morocco, then to Marseilles, and finally to Paris.

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Bastille Day is the big French holiday here, as it is in France. It comes on July 14 and there are parades, speeches, sports, and fireworks.

Someday I hope to be able to say to you in Senegalese *Djamagam*, which means 'How do you do?' But now all I can say is *Mangidem*, which means 'Good-bye'.

4. THE GAMBIA

FIRST BRITISH SETTLEMENT IN AFRICA

The Earth Worm

THERE never was another country like this one on the face of the globe. It is nothing but a river with its two banks. The land is only from six to thirty miles wide on either side of the long stream. On the map the country looks like a wriggling worm, or a wrinkled stocking pulled over the leg of the river. It forms the upper lip on our westward-looking African face.

The river, however, is very important. The Gambia is the only river in the whole continent of Africa that ocean steamers can navigate for one hundred and fifty miles. They cannot do that on the Nile. They cannot do that on the Congo. Moreover, smaller steamers can sail upstream on the Gambia for another hundred and fifty miles.

The Company of Adventurers

The full name was The Company of Adventurers of London Trading in Africa. The company got a charter from James I, King of England, in 1618. It was very much interested in the Gambia.

Of course, the early explorers had found the river long before. It was discovered by Luigi Cadamosto in 1455. The first man to be buried on James Island, some twenty-five

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miles up the river, was one of his sailors. The Portuguese established their factories there. Then, in 1618, the new Company of Adventurers decided to get this trade for themselves, if they could.

They had very bad luck. George Thompson set out for them in 1618. The Portuguese attacked and massacred many of the men on his ship. A second ship was sent out. Most of the men died of malaria. They had no mosquito nets in those days. Finally, Thompson's men mutinied against him and murdered him. Then the company sent out a third vessel under the command of Richard Jobson. He sailed far upstream, but he had to turn back at last. The difficulties were too many. The whole enterprise collapsed.

Other men followed. Their explorations made it quite clear that the Gambia had no connection with the Senegal or the Niger. But the Gambia itself was valuable. For a century and a half the Portuguese, the French, and the British struggled for it and the slave trade that flowed down the river. Finally, the British prevailed.

The African Association

This organization had another long name. It was the African Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa. It was founded in 1788 by Sir Joseph Banks. Sir Joseph was a scientist. Twenty years before he had gone out with Captain James Cook on the latter's first voyage to the South Pacific to find the *terra australis*, or South Land. There was not any South Land. Then in 1783 General Cornwallis surrendered to General Washington at Yorktown and England lost her American colonies. So she began to look to Africa for other lands to take their place. This was the reason why Sir Joseph Banks founded the African Association.

The society sent out a number of explorers to see what lay in the interior of this unknown continent. Of the first four,

three died, and the fourth abandoned the effort. Finally, they sent out a young Scot whose name will never be forgotten.

Mungo Park

Mungo Park was a surgeon and a botanist. He was only twenty-four when he arrived in 1795 at Pisanía some distance up the Gambia. His instructions were to find the Niger River, to discover where it rose and where it went. The Niger was the mysterious river of West Africa. No European had ever seen it. Some people called it the Nile of the Negroes. The Negroes called it the Great River. The word Niger comes from the Latin *niger*, which means 'black'. No one knew where the source of the river was, nor where its mouth was. Many people thought it flowed to the west. Others thought it emptied into the Nile. Still others thought it emptied into the Congo.

Park remained at Pisanía for some months learning something of the native languages. Then on December 3, 1795, he started up the Gambia River. On Christmas Day, after he had reached the Senegal River, he was robbed of almost all his possessions and left penniless. That evening he was sitting in despair under a tree, when an old female slave came along with a basket on her head. Park was chewing straws, as he had nothing else to eat. The woman stopped to ask this strange white man if he had had his dinner. When she learned that he had been robbed, she gave him a generous supply of peanuts.

This simple deed of friendliness restored the explorer's courage. He decided to continue his journey. He followed the Senegal eastward through dense forests, always travelling in the direction of the Niger. Everyone he met was astonished at the brass buttons and buttonholes of his blue coat. They had never seen anything so wonderful as that before. Park sold some of the buttons for food.

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He met hostile Arabs who made life miserable for him. One of the native rulers threw him into prison and almost starved him to death. Finally, he escaped from his captors. Most men would have turned back then, but Park did not. He was determined to find the Niger. Many times he was on the point of death from hunger and thirst. The natives were suspicious of this queer white man. Why should anyone be looking for a river? Had he never seen a river before?

The Niger Flowed to the East!

Then one day, while passing through a small village, the people told him he would see the Joliba, or Great River, on the following morning. Long before daybreak, late in July, 1796, he started off, and there at last, he wrote, 'was the long-sought-for majestic Niger, glittering to the morning sun, as broad as the Thames at Westminster, and *flowing to the eastward.*' The italics were Park's.

Not even then was he willing to give up the quest. He continued to follow the river to the east until the rainy season came. The waters began to rise and cover all the lowlands. The mosquitoes were terrible. Lions roaring around him made the nights hideous. His body was covered with sores. He was almost naked and half starved. He could go no farther. So he turned about and started back on the long homeward trail. He was nineteen hundred miles away from Pisanía on the Gambia. The torture of that journey cannot be described. At last he was able to join a caravan and after eight more weeks he reached Pisanía in June, 1797. No one knew him at first. They did not even recognize him as a white man.

The next eight years were spent at home in Scotland. Then in 1805, Mungo Park returned to the Gambia for a second remarkable journey to the Niger. We shall read about it when we visit Nigeria.

FIRST BRITISH SETTLEMENT IN AFRICA

The Oldest, The Smallest, The Poorest

The Gambia is now a British Colony and Protectorate. The colony consists of the land at the mouth of the river, in the heart of which, on the island of St. Mary, lies Bathurst, the capital. The protectorate is all the rest of the long, straggling country. The Gambia is the oldest British possession in Africa. It is also the smallest. And certainly it is the poorest. It has fewer than three hundred thousand people, a few hundreds of whom are Lebanese, and a few hundreds European. Peanuts and rice are the chief crops. British efforts to strengthen the economy have not been successful. England lost a couple of million pounds trying to establish huge poultry farms and to irrigate thousands of acres for rice.

The Five French Fingers

Except for a few miles on the Atlantic Ocean, the Gambia is completely surrounded by the Republic of Senegal, north, east, and south. What used to be French West Africa has five fingers that reach to the sea. Two of them are squeezing little Gambia. A third stretches down between Portuguese Guinea and Sierra Leone. A fourth sticks down between Liberia and Ghana, and a fifth between Ghana and Nigeria. Some of these coastal countries that lie among the fingers are now independent. The others are British and Portuguese.

Momodu Lamin Jobe was born far up the Gambia River just below the little monument in the bush that marks the place where Mungo Park started on his two journeys. Lucritia Olumbummi Victoria Ethel Peters was born in Bathurst. Her long name need not trouble us. We can call her Bummi with her family. Both of these fine young people speak Mandingo, and so they join in saying to us, *Sumolule*, which means 'How is everybody?'

I AM A MANDINGO

BY MOMODU LAMIN JOBE

I am Blind in One Eye

WHEN I was a very small child, just after I had learned to walk a little, I was running to my father one day with a stick in my mouth. I stumbled and fell down. The stick broke on the ground, and one end of it stuck in my eye. My father rushed me to the hospital and they got the stick out, but I have not been able to see with that eye since then.

The People of Bansang

That was in the village of Bansang, way up on the Gambia Bajio, as my people call the Gambia River. I was born there fourteen years ago. Bansang is 186 miles east of Bathurst, which is at the mouth of the river, where it flows into the Atlantic Ocean.

There are about two thousand people in and around my village. They are mostly farmers, though many of them have cows and sheep and goats. Peanuts, or groundnuts, are the main crop my people grow. Beginning about December the traders come to gather up the peanut crop. Then about the first of February the boats start taking the peanuts down the river to Bathurst, where they are loaded on the big ocean-going vessels.

The people grow rice, too, and about a half mile away from the town there are some swamps which are fine for growing rice. Of course, people fish a little in the river, but only to get food for their families. Behind the village, away from the

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river, there are hills covered with forests. The men and women cut wood there for the fires.

Most of the people are Moslems and I am a Moslem. There was one mosque in the village where I went.

Tribes

My father is a Wolof from Bathurst, and my mother is a Mandingo. I call myself a Mandingo, for my village is a Mandingo village. There are more Mandingo in the Gambia than any other people. But other important tribes are the Fullah and Serahuli. I speak Mandingo, Wolof, and English. I am also learning French.

Village Huts

The huts in my village have mud walls, but there are a number of Syrian traders and shopkeepers in the place and they usually build their houses of brick. Some of the roofs are of corrugated iron, but most of them are thatched with grass. There is one house for each father, another for all the wives, a third house for the girls, and a fourth house for the boys. When the girls get older they put up partitions in their huts to separate them from the younger girls. Most of the fathers have two wives, but some have three or four. There is a fence around these family huts and this makes a compound.

The small children hardly wear any clothes at all. When the boys get older they put on a kind of long gown with openings for the head and the arms. When the girls get older they wear long dresses gathered at the waist with a full skirt.

Inside the huts there are cots made of sticks stuck in the ground with cross sticks on them and a mattress of hay or kapok on top. We have low stools to sit on but no tables. There is usually a hut for the kitchen with an iron roof, and the wives in the family take turns cooking, each of them

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working for three days at a time. There is a big tree in the centre of the compound which gives much shade, and around it is a low platform where everybody sits to eat. There is a big bowl for the whole family and each of us brings a small bowl to get his share of the food. We have no knives or forks. We all eat with spoons.

Some people in the village have dug wells, but we always got our water from the river. Getting it is a girl's job, but there are men who also bring water to the village to sell.

Wild Animals

There are lots of monkeys and some of the children have pet ones. Hyenas run around in the forest. The latter used to bother us a great deal. They used to dig up the graves to get at the bodies. Then the men built a fence to keep them out. The hyenas can pass through the gate, but if they do it's easy to see them, and the men get their guns and shoot them. The river has some crocodiles in it, but not many. I have only seen one of them, and I have never heard of anyone being bitten by them. Some of the people put a kind of spell on them, so they cannot trouble anyone.

I lived in Bansang until I was five years old. We had a few orange trees and grapevines in our compound and I used to water them. I used to play football with the other boys. Our ball was a tight wad of paper.

Bansang, Pakalinding, and Bathurst

There was only one school in Bansang, a primary school run by the district authorities. There was no infant school. I went to this school for two months only. Then the family moved to Pakalinding, which is not right on the river but three and a half miles inland on the main road. The people there were farmers, too. They grew a great deal of rice, which they sold to other villages and to the traders. The life of this village was just about the same as it was in

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Bansang. I continued to go to the district school there for the next four years, and completed the fourth standard.

Then I was sent to Bathurst, where I went at once to the Methodist Boys' High School. That is where I am now. Until the beginning of 1959 all the secondary schools in the country were mission schools, but now these schools are nondenominational. The missions are represented on the boards of governors. The pupils pay about nine pounds a year for their tuition.

I am studying French, English, literature, arithmetic, science, Scriptures, art, history, and a little algebra. I like history best and I should like to be a school teacher. But my father wants me to be a doctor.

My Father is an Inspector

My father's name is Sedat Jobe. He is a sanitary inspector for the government, and he travels to many places. He inspects the milk, water, markets, cows, slaughterhouses, and he gives vaccinations. He has a motorcycle on which he can ride, but he also uses the government boats on the river. My mother's name is Mansato Darbo. My father is now trying to get a second wife. He will give a number of cows for her and he will have a big wedding feast.

I am the oldest of the children. My brother Mustafa is eleven and he is at school in Pakalinding. Mami is a girl of nine, and she is also at school there. Then come two girls, Aline, who is five, and Fatu, who is three. The baby Suku is a boy. He was named after my grandfather.

My family is still living at Pakalinding. I am living in Bathurst with a man who has been a friend of my father's since they were boys together. Some other boys live in the house, too.

All Day Long

I get up at five-thirty in the morning. I say my Moslem prayers, and then I go around and say good morning to

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everybody in the compound. In my Mandingo language this is *sumolule*, which means 'How are the people in the compound?' After that I do a little work about the house or clean the motor bike for my father. At seven-thirty I have breakfast: bread, butter, jam, and coffee. Then I prepare to go to school, which is fifteen minutes away on foot. From eight-thirty to nine we have prayers, then lessons from nine to three. I eat something in the compound at twelve-five: cassava, groundnuts, and beans. I bring this lunch from home. Then I jump and play a bit before I go into class again at twelve-fifty. At three I go home and get my lunch, but it is already cooked for me. I usually have rice, meat or fish, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, onions, peppers, and lettuce. I drink water.

Then I take off my uniform, which consists of blue shorts and white blouse, and put on my home clothes. I may do some homework then, or help around the house. I usually go out to play football with a paper ball. Then I have a light supper, like rice and beans and water. I have rice at least twice a day.

In the evening we sit down together, and everybody reads except the women. They have not been to school and do not know how to read, so they sew and iron. I go to bed at nine-thirty.

Work and Play

We have no school on Saturday or Sunday, and then I visit friends and play with the boys. We go on picnics, too, taking some food and some money to buy fruit. There is no cinema in Bathurst. Friday afternoon I go to the mosque. In Pakalinding I used to go to the Koranic school, which was held every day except Saturday and Sunday.

During the long holiday I go home to Pakalinding. Since I have grown bigger I have often worked on the groundnut farms, hoeing and weeding. I also help to drive away the

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birds, the monkeys, and the bush pigs that do a lot of damage to the crops. I use an ordinary slingshot, and also another kind of sling that you swing around before you let the stone go. I make a noise to frighten the monkeys. We have a high platform beside the field, and a line running from the platform to a pole at the other end of the field. We tie tin cans to the line and shake the line to scare the birds away.

I can paddle a canoe and we often go hunting in it. We go along the Gambia River a bit, tie up the boat, and hunt for rabbits with our dogs. The dogs catch them and then we kill them with knives. Sometimes we cook the meat and sometimes we sell it. One day, when the dogs were chasing a rabbit, the rabbit turned and ran between my legs and got away.

Mungo Park

I did not tell you about one interesting thing. Ten miles upstream from the village I was born in, and on the same bank, a little monument has been built in honour of Mungo Park, the great explorer. It was here that he started out on his expeditions to trace the course of the Niger River.

I AM A CREOLE

BY LUCRITIA OLUMBUMMI VICTORIA ETHEL PETERS

My Early Life

I AM a Creole, that is, I am part European and part African. I speak a patois which is made up of English, Wolof, and dialects from West Africa, Nigeria, and Ghana. They speak

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mostly Wolof here, because there are so many Wolofs around Bathurst. Besides Creole and Wolof, I speak Mandingo and English.

I was born in Bathurst, the capital of Gambia, fifteen years ago. My house was a wooden house in the south part of the city. It had two stories and a corrugated iron roof. I lived there for four years. Mamma had a little shop on the street floor and sold food, cloth, and other things. We had a garden where we used to grow snake tomatoes. They tasted like pumpkins, but they were long and thin, so we called them snake tomatoes.

The Gambia River is three miles across at Bathurst, and I can see where it flows into the Atlantic Ocean.

My Family

When I was four the family moved to Freetown in Sierra Leone, where my father was born, and where my mother went to school. My father and mother had been married there and then they had moved to Bathurst. When we went back I stayed in Freetown for two years.

My father's name is Josephus Robertson Egerton Peters. He is about sixty-six and he has always worked for the Elder Dempster Steamship Company. Because there are other men called Peters he is known as the Elder Dempster Peters. His work has to do with the customs.

My mother is Phebean Regina Peters and she was born in Bathurst. I am the oldest of the children. I have a long name, but at home they just call me Bummi and at school they call me Victoria. I have a brother Ingram Femi, who is twelve, and a sister Hannah Eileen Lucy Acy, who is ten, and goes to the same school I go to.

My mother taught me the alphabet before I went to school at all. She told me that if I learned it I could have a ride in a car. So I learned it and my uncle took me for a five-mile drive in his auto, the first ride I ever had. I learned to spell

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a few simple words, too. In those early days my mother used to let me visit my aunt when I was good. When I was bad I had to stand in a corner.

Schools

After I came home from Freetown to Bathurst I went to the infant school for two years. This was a state school. Then I went to the Wesley School which was run by the Methodists at that time, though it is no longer run by them. There are seven classes in this school and I entered standard one. Then I went through standard four. After that I had to pass an examination before I could be admitted to my school, but is no longer a Methodist school. I have been there for five years now, and I have one more year to go.

I am studying English, English composition and literature, science, geography, history, arithmetic, geometry, algebra, art, singing, Scripture (Acts and the life of Christ), and physical training. I think I like mathematics best, and I should like to be a teacher of mathematics. Of course, I might get married, but girls here seldom get married before they are eighteen.

From the Rising of the Sun

I get up at 6 a.m. and then we have prayers at home. We are Christians, and we have a Bible reading, and then each of us takes a turn in praying. I help to clean the house, have a bath, put on my school uniform, which is a blue dress with a blue belt and a white collar, and then eat my breakfast. I have cornflakes or a cooked cereal, bread and butter, sometimes sausages, coffee or tea.

It is a ten-minute walk to school. School begins with prayers from eight-thirty to eight-forty-five. Then it lasts until two-ten. We have one break from ten to ten-ten, and a second from eleven-thirty to twelve-five. I bring some bread and fruit from home and eat it outdoors. At two-ten all the

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classes gather in the hall and we have a hymn and a prayer. Then I go home for my lunch, which is rice and beans, or rice and fish, or rice and meat, with vegetables. Once a week we have a stew which is called *bena chin*. This means in Wolof 'one pot'. and it is made of rice, meat, fish, tomatoes, peppers, or other things, all cooked together in one pot.

Sometimes we eat what we call in English *palava* sauce, and in Creole *plasas*. *Plasas* is just *palava* sauce said quickly. This is made of meat or fish, with leaves and palm oil. We often eat pounded and dried cassava with sugar and water.

In the afternoon I go for a walk with the other girls and then eat some fruit at home before I sit down to do my homework. After that I help to get supper, which we have at six. This is a lighter meal, but we always have the same kind of food. In the evening I sometimes do homework, sometimes I read, and sometimes I do handwork. I can crochet, and I love to make artificial flowers, mostly roses, out of coloured paper. People buy them before Christmas and I sell them when I can. In the evening friends often come in to chat.

I love to dance and we have drums we call *druma*, and different kinds of xylophones, which we Creoles call *asiko*, or *konkomah*, the Wolofs call *sabarr*, and the Mandingos call *bantabah*.

I am usually in bed at ten, but sometimes I stay up till twelve.

Weekends and Holidays

Saturday is a busy day for us Christians, for we have to get ready for Sunday, when we are not supposed to do any work. So we cook the food we are to eat on Sunday. First I go to the market to buy rice and other things. Then we make *palava* sauce, sweets, and other dishes. If there is to be a bazaar at the mission on Saturday, we start to prepare for Sunday on Friday.

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On Sunday I go to church at seven. I am a member of the Gambia Church, which is the Church of England here. The church is near my home. I go to Sunday school at three-thirty in the afternoon, and to the evening service at seven. After Sunday school I visit my relations and friends.

We have our long holiday in July and August. We go on picnics then. I like to go to Kombo where there is a lot of open country and some small towns, or to Barra just outside Bathurst. When I was two years old I went to Lagos in Nigeria with Mamma, but I do not remember that journey at all.

Fourah Bay College

If I can get a scholarship I want to go to Fourah Bay College, which is on top of Mount Aureol at Freetown in the Sierra Leone. If I do not get one I will go to Yundum near Bathurst for my teacher training.

Our Christmas Tree

We love Christmas here and we begin to celebrate a few days before. People sing carols about the streets. On Christmas Eve we have tableaux and a midnight service. We have another service on Christmas morning, and at home we have presents and a Christmas tree. The tree is a cashew tree.

5. PORTUGUESE GUINEA

A REMNANT OF WEST COAST PORTUGAL

The Guinea Coast

HERE we are on the Guinea Coast. This is the whole southern shore of the African bulge from the Gambia to the Republic of Gabon. The early explorers got quite excited when they found the coast line beginning to turn east in Portuguese Guinea. They thought they were about to discover the southern tip of Africa and the open seaway to the wealth of India.

We know now that this was not true. Many thousands of perilous miles still separated these sailors from the Cabo Tormentoso, the Stormy Cape, as they first called the Cape of Good Hope. Nonetheless, the Guinea Coast has been enormously important in the history of Africa. And we look forward eagerly to our meeting with the young people of Portuguese Guinea, French Guinea, and the other countries lying to the east along the tropical shores of the Gulf of Guinea.

Portuguese Guinea

We have been following the old Portuguese explorers down the west coast of Africa and we shall continue to follow them on their bold voyages to the south. We know that it was the Portuguese more than any others who

A REMNANT OF WEST COAST PORTUGAL

discovered these countries we are now visiting. Everywhere they set up their factories and built their forts. Yet only a few small scraps of land here on the big African bulge belong to Portugal now. The tiny fort of St. John the Baptist of Ajuda still rises on the shores of Dahomey, the two cocoa islands of São Tomé and Príncipe lie off the coast of Gabon, and the lower lip of our African face is Portuguese Guinea. Much farther south, of course, is the great Portuguese province of Angola, but here on the bulge of Africa, where Portugal used to be the leading power, very little is left.

The Cape of the Masts

Other explorers followed Cadamosto, who reached the Gambia River in 1445. One of them, João Gonçalves Zarco, sailed as far as the Cabo dos Mastos. This was south of the important river, called the Rio Grande, in what is now Portuguese Guinea. The name means the 'Cape of the Masts', and probably got its name from some dead palm trees there that looked like the masts of ships.

Another Portuguese explorer, whose name was Nuno Tristão, followed him. He had been ordered to go beyond the Cabo dos Mastos, but he never got that far. Instead, he entered the Rio Grande, and in a small boat pushed upstream. There he was attacked by natives armed with poisoned arrows. He and many of his men were killed. This was in 1447.

The Slave Trade

Nuno Tristão was probably looking for slaves when he entered the Rio Grande. The slave trade was becoming very important even in those early days. Trading posts had been built on the Rio Grande and the other rivers. It may seem strange to you that Prince Henry the Navigator should have been the one to start the slave trade here in West Africa, but so it was. The great landowners of the southern

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province of Algarves and the south-eastern province of Alemtejo in Portugal needed many labourers to cultivate their farms. Prince Henry's ships supplied them with slaves. This made him very popular with the Portuguese nobles. It made him popular also with the explorers. Their ships no longer came home with empty holds. The slave trade even made exploration profitable. As early as 1444 a fleet of eight ships brought back two hundred slaves, who were set to work on the estates of the religious Order of Christ in Algarves. The whole story reveals the moral blindness of that age.

By the end of the seventeenth century Bissau, which is now the capital of the country, had become the principal centre of the slave trade for this whole region. Slaves were then in great demand for the Spanish colonies and for Brazil.

President Ulysses S. Grant

Portuguese Guinea belongs to Portugal today only because of a United States president. It happened this way. In the middle of the nineteenth century, England claimed the island of Bolama off this coast and the mainland opposite. A long dispute with Portugal took place, but finally an agreement was reached to let President Grant iron out the quarrel. In 1870 the president decided in favour of Portugal.

Meanwhile the French had occupied the territory along the Casamance River between the Gambia and Portuguese Guinea. This is now a part of Senegal. The French had also seized the country between Portuguese Guinea and what is now Sierra Leone, an area then called the Rivières du Sud, or the Southern Rivers. This is now the new Republic of Guinea.

So Portuguese Guinea, like the Gambia, is now pinched between two fingers of former French West Africa.

I AM A BALANTA

The Province of Portuguese Guinea

Until 1879 Portuguese Guinea was governed from the Cape Verde Islands, Portuguese possessions that lie out in the Atlantic Ocean almost four hundred miles west of Dakar. Since then it has had its own governor. It is now considered to be a province of Portugal, just like any other province of the motherland.

The country is low and hot with many rivers and swamps. More than a half-million people live there. They export peanuts, rubber, palm oil, and ivory.

Portuguese Guinea has about sixteen different tribes. The most important is the Balanta, the tribe to which our Fonseca belongs. His people are mostly tall and slender. They are very hard workers. Maria Nosalina da Costa Semedo, whose house name is Celeste, is one of the Manjaco. They, too, are a fine people, as well as traders and skilled workers.

I AM A BALANTA

BY FONSECA

I do not know my age

I was born in Kere in the Bissora area of Portuguese Guinea. This is about sixty miles from Bissau, the capital. I belong to the Balanta tribe, which is the largest in the country. We have only one name among my people and my name used to be Sumada. I do not know when I was born, neither the day, nor the month, nor the year. But I know I am not yet sixteen, because I have not yet had to pay any head tax, which the Portuguese government makes us pay when we are sixteen.

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I never knew my father. His name was Tokna and he died when I was a baby. He was a farmer and grew rice and peanuts. He had a lot of cows, flocks of sheep, and herds of goats. He grew his rice first on dry land and then transplanted it to wet land, where the water was held in by little dykes. He grew peanuts at the same time as he was growing rice.

We lived in a swampy country which was very good for rice. But the people grew manioc and sweet potatoes also. After my father died I used to help with the work in the fields. In our village the youngsters looked after the animals, and when they got big enough they went to work with the ploughs.

The boys and girls in the village wore no clothing when they were small, but when they began to grow the girls put on little cotton dresses and the boys put on shorts. This was all the clothing we had. Everybody went barefoot.

There were many things to do around my village and in the forests. I used to go fishing with a small stick and a line. I used bits of crab meat for bait. We used to build little houses in the forest and pretend we were having initiation ceremonies. We did what we thought the men did, though none of us knew exactly what that was.

Hyenas, Snakes, Monkeys, Crocodiles

There were many animals around. There were ounces in the forests and at night the hyenas came out and howled. There were snakes, too, including a big black one that was very poisonous. Once we saw an enormous snake and we were frightened and ran away. But the snake went into an anteater's hole and when we saw that we came back and killed it as it was coming out. Then we had to have a ceremony to protect us from the snake's evil spirit.

There were monkeys everywhere and they caused us a lot of trouble, because they liked to dig up the groundnuts

and eat them. We small boys had to drive them away. We had slingshots and we used to run after them. But while we were chasing them out of one side of the field they would come in on the other side. We had little shelters in the field where we could stay.

We were afraid of the crocodiles. In normal times when the river was low we used to get our water from it without any danger, for the crocodiles stayed where it was deep. But when the river was high the water was deep everywhere and we had to be very careful. We could see the triangular heads on the surface of the water. So we all stayed away, and got our water from the small streams. Some of the people, however, had crocodiles as totems and so they were not afraid. They said no crocodile would touch them, and they got their water from the river.

Mud Houses

All the villages in my country are very much the same. Still, each tribe builds its houses in a slightly different way. The houses usually are built in little groups, but all the groups belong to the same community. These houses are always made of mud, a handful at a time patted into place. The roofs are peaked and thatched with grass, and they have wide, overhanging eaves. These eaves provide shade from the hot sun, and under them are little fireplaces made of three stones where the people cook their meals. There is usually a single door and no windows, so the huts are very dark inside. That makes them cool, however, in the hot weather, and particularly so because the walls are eight inches thick. We always slept on palmleaf fronds spread on the earth. We had a box for our clothes but no other furniture.

The village had no school in it, and I have never been to school anywhere.

My mother's name was Nduka. I had an older sister who

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was called Saia. She is now married and lives in another village with her husband and her two children.

Spirit House, Idols, and Amulets

In the middle of the village stands a spirit house. This is a thatched hut without walls. Inside in the middle, raised on low stilts, is a boxlike structure, the sides covered with raffia matting. Certain men and women in the village are supposed to be in close touch with the spirits and at times they get inside these boxes and mumble a jargon which someone outside interprets, telling the people what the spirits are trying to say to them. Outside the box hang the bones of animals that have been offered to the spirits, and you can see the dried blood of chickens and other animals.

I was brought up in this village. Later I became a Christian and this year I went back with a native evangelist to take the idol out of my home. My mother was still there, and she did not object, though she did not understand why I was doing this.

This idol was in three parts. There was a stick in the ground where the spirit lived. Near it was a tiny house filled with rice, which was used for the sacrifices. Then there was a tiny plough. The idea was that the spirit in the stick would bless the plough so that the house would be filled with rice. The three things were called *booli*, which is the plural of *ooli*, The great fetish in which our people believe is called *Iran*, and it is very real and very terrible to them.

While I was athome the people wanted me to eat some meat that had been offered to idols, but I had been taught that this was wrong, so I refused. My mother also wanted me to attend the native ceremonies in the forest, and she was very much puzzled when I would not go.

When I first left my village I had a bracelet which I wore on my arm. It was made by a blacksmith. This was an amulet to protect me. Shortly afterwards I lost it, and I was

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much worried. I went back to the village and my mother told me to get a handful of earth from the place where I lost it and bring it back to the village. Then after certain ceremonies I could get a new amulet, or charm. I never did this, however, because just afterwards I became a Christian.

How I became a Christian

I left my home to live with my uncle in another village, where I used to help him with the ploughing. There were some Protestant missionaries that came to this village to evangelize and when I heard them I was converted. Then I took the new Portuguese name of Fonseca. I have been a Christian now for two years. Some of the missionaries have taught me how to read and write a little, and I can read the Bible. But I have never learned any arithmetic.

For the past two years I have been living at the children's home of the Evangelical Mission of Portuguese Guinea. It is called the *Quinta de Alegria*, which means the 'garden of happiness'. This is a home for little children most of whom have been taken away from leprous parents the day they were born. Eleven of the sixteen children that live at the home are of this kind. The oldest one of all the children is nearly five. The government has brought sleeping sickness under control now and they are turning their attention to leprosy. When the government took over the leper colonies they discharged most of the patients, because they thought the clinics could take care of them.

The mission wants to bring up these children to be evangelists. An American woman, Miss Gladys MacKenzie from the state of Washington, is in charge of the *quinta*.

I Help with the Children

I have been asked to help at the *quinta* and I am very happy there. I get up at 6 a.m., get the children out of bed,

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wash them, and see that they get dressed. Then we have a half hour for prayers, when all the children, even the babies, go to chapel. We sing and pray, recite Bible texts, and have Bible stories. After that I carry water. The little children have breakfast of rice flour mixed with water to make a porridge, but we natives have no regular breakfast. Our heavy meals come at midday and at night. If something is left over from the day before, I may eat it in the morning. Our native foods are mainly rice, sweet potatoes, manioc, fish, and red oil made from palm nuts.

All the morning I work around the house cleaning and doing other chores. The children have their dinner about eleven and then I help to put them to bed. After that I have my lunch. This may be dried fish and vegetables. At night I may have some more fish.

In the afternoon I have to go on with my cleaning. And at four I give the children a bath and help with their evening meal. Then I dress them for the night and put them to bed at six o'clock.

I Want to be a Missionary

We have many missionary meetings. In the evenings I usually go around to the services in the different villages. These services for the most part are under native leadership. Sometimes I lead the meetings myself and preach. I like to do this, although the natives sometimes jeer at me because I have given up the old customs. I am really living apart from them now, and have no life outside the mission and its work. But I try to keep in touch with my friends in the old village. I go to bed at 9 p.m.

Every two weeks I am free on Sunday afternoon and evening, but I always try to help with the religious work at that time. I have never travelled anywhere except to my village and to the places where these meetings are held.

Of course, I never heard of Christmas in the old days, but

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now we have a kind of English Christmas for the little children with a tree and lights and presents and a Christmas pageant.

I am so grateful to the mission for what it has done for me that I want to be a missionary myself.

I AM A MANJACO

BY MARIA NOSALINA DA COSTA SEMEDO

They Call Me Uncivilized

I CAN read and write, I can eat with a knife and a fork, but I am only a registered native. That means to the Portuguese that I am still uncivilized. I have a long Portuguese name, but most of us have house names also and my house name is Celeste. My father is a Manjaco, and the Manjaco territory is about sixty miles away from Bissau. The Manjaco are not the most important tribe in Portuguese Guinea, but they are well known as sailors and weavers. Most of them are farmers, too. My father's name is João Gomes Semedo and he was born on the island of Peciche. He is different from most of his race for he works in a quarry, breaking up stones for building.

My mother's name is Isabella Gomes Semedo and she belongs to the Balanta tribe. I do not know where she was born.

I myself was born in Bissau fourteen years ago, and I have always lived there. The district where I live is called Alta Crim, but we have no street names or numbers and no mail deliveries. If I know letters are coming for me I can get them from the General Delivery at the post office, or someone can bring them to me.

PORTUGUESE GUINEA

Five of Us Live in One Room

My house is a long rectangular house with eight rooms in it. There are eight families and each of them has one room. The walls of the house are of mud and the roof is thatched with grass. Five of us live in this room which has a door and one small window. Besides my mother and father I have a brother Ror, who is twelve and at school, and a sister Maria de Felicidade, who is six and also at school. I have an older half sister, Maria Luisa, but she is not at home. Her father was Portuguese, and he has sent her to Lisbon to study to become a doctor. She is not married.

Many people sleep on the ground, but we have four beds in our room. We also have a table and some chairs. Most people eat with their fingers, but I usually eat with a spoon. My father used to have a cupboard in the house, but that is broken now. The kitchen is outside under the window and protected by the eaves.

What Little Girls Do

When I was small I used to help Mamma with her work. I helped clean the house and I went to market with her and fetched water with her. The little girls learn to carry small water pails on their heads, then as they get older the pails get bigger until they are carrying as much water as their mothers. One of the jobs of the women is to pound the rice in a big wooden mortar hollowed out of the trunk of a tree in order to make rice flour, but my father did not want me to do this. He wanted me to grow up a little better than other girls. However, when my father was away my mother used to let me do this. It was fun.

Of course, we used to play lots of games when I was small. We used to run and jump and we loved to play at cooking. We had tins we filled with sand. But my father did not let me go out on the road to play.

When I was sick my mother used to take me to a witch

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doctor, but that was only when Papa was away. He did not believe in witch doctors. The witch doctor used to do many different things to drive out the sickness. Once he took a chicken, removed the intestines, mixed them with water, and made me drink it all.

My Schooling

The first teaching I had was from my father at home. Then for three years I went to the local Catholic school, where I learned to read and write and to do some arithmetic. I also studied grammar there, and learned the catechism. Then a Protestant missionary and his wife came back from a leave to England and I went to their home about fifty miles away from Bissau to take care of their children. My father was converted to Christianity, and then my mother. I myself have been a Christian for two years now.

I am no longer in the missionary's home. My father wanted me to come back to Bissau to get some more education. I could have gone to a Catholic school, but Papa did not want me to go there. He sent me to a private school taught by a native teacher in his own house. He has about twenty boys and girls. Papa pays him about twenty-five escudos (7s. 6d.) a month. I am studying geography, history, arithmetic, and Portuguese. I am not very far advanced. They tell me I would still be in the very first form in a western school.

The easiest studies for me are grammar and arithmetic, and so I like them best.

Morning, Noon and Night

I get up at six-thirty. Then I read the Bible and pray. After that I do some homework and help a little with the house. For breakfast I have bread and butter and coffee. We call breakfast a *matarbicho*. The word comes from the Portuguese expression, *para matar o bicho*, which means 'to kill the worm'.

PORTUGUESE GUINEA

From eight to twelve in the morning I go to a sewing class. I have just begun to learn how to use a sewing machine. I shall be able to make all my own clothes and even to earn my own living, if I ever have to. This sewing class is fifteen minutes away from my house.

At midday we have a big meal of rice with meat, or rice with fish, either fresh or dried. We make gravy for the rice from the meat or the fish. I do not use the red oil made from the palm nuts.

In the afternoon I have a ten-minute walk to the private school I spoke about. The school lasts from two to five. Then I come home and help Mamma with the cooking. We use peanut oil for cooking and we make gravy out of peanuts, too. We eat a good deal of manioc and all kinds of fruit: oranges, bananas, papayas, mangoes, and cashews. The cashews are not the nuts, but the fruit, which looks like a pear. I also collect the cashew nuts. The shell is bitter and not good to eat. So we roast the nuts in a tin until they are black. Then we hull them and eat them.

In the evening I study until bedtime, which comes about nine-thirty. Sometimes I go to the religious meetings in the evening.

Sundays

On Sunday I have Sunday school and then the church service in the morning. In the afternoon I often go with six or eight other people to conduct a religious meeting. We go to a village, form a circle in the middle of it, and conduct a service with a leader.

I Shall Probably get Married Soon

In another year or so I shall probably get married. Most girls here get married when they are about sixteen, and my people think it is a disgrace not to get married and have children. So I don't know how much longer I shall be at

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school. The marriage will be arranged by my father and the boy's father, and a contract will be drawn up. The man usually pays a dowry. Where my father comes from the dowry is usually a cow, some wine, some tobacco, and some money. I shall have nothing to say about the choice of my husband, but since my father is a Christian now I shall probably get a Christian husband and perhaps he will not be asked to pay a dowry.

6. THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA

POVERTY AND LIBERTY

Regions and Races

As you travel away from the coast in the Republic of Guinea you pass through four different regions. First is Lower Guinea, a flat country close to the ocean. It is mostly sandbanks, lagoons, creeks, and canals. For the sailors in their coastal boats sometimes the only landmark to steer by is a tree. This shore was never very inviting. The early explorers did not linger here.

Inland from the coast is a forest belt, not so important, as it is farther east in these Guinea countries. Then the land rises to the plateau of Middle Guinea, and gradually to Upper Guinea, where the Fouta Djallon mountains climb to the height of about four thousand feet.

There are many different tribes in these regions. The people call them races.

Captain Kidd

Just off Conakry, the pretty but rather sleepy capital of the country, lie the Isles de Los. They are fragments of an old volcano that sank into the sea. Until the early years of this century they belonged to England. Then they were given to France in exchange for some islands in the New Hebrides in the Pacific Ocean.

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There is an old legend that Captain William Kidd buried some of his loot here. But the whole story of Captain Kidd is very questionable. He was commissioned by the British government to defend their ships against pirates. They called him a privateer in those days. Perhaps he did turn pirate in the end, though he always denied it. Finally, he was tried in London, found guilty, and hanged in 1701.

The Amelia and the Aréthuse

There was a famous sea fight off these islands during the Napoleonic Wars between the British frigate *Amelia* and the French frigate *Aréthuse*. The ships grappled and fought all through one moonlit night, gun muzzle to gun muzzle, musket to musket, cutlass to cutlass. On the gun deck, on the main deck, in the mastheads, the sailors fought. Many were killed and wounded. When in the dawn the ships drew apart, neither could claim a victory.

René Caillié Starts for Timbuktu

Here begins the story of a tale of adventure to match Mungo Park's amazing expedition to trace the course of the mysterious Niger. René Caillié was not born when Park started on his first journey. He was only a small boy when Park set out on his second journey. His boyhood was very unhappy. His father died in prison when he was nine, his mother died when he was eleven. René went to live with his grandmother.

He was already burning for adventure. His hero was Robinson Crusoe. At fifteen he went to his guardian uncle and amazed him by saying, 'Please, Uncle Barthélémy, I wish to go to Africa and discover Timbuktu!'

The next year he left for the Senegal with sixty francs in his pocket.

Then for years he tried in vain to reach the interior. He had no friends. He had no money. He had to take various

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jobs to keep himself alive. These jobs took him from time to time away from Africa as far as the West Indies, back to Bordeaux in France. He was able to travel in Africa, but he could not get near Timbuktu. In fact, no European had ever gone to Timbuktu.

In Freetown, Sierra Leone, he took a government job. For long months he worked as a gardener, saving his money until he had two thousand francs. Most of it he used to buy trade goods for the interior. Then he took a ship north to Kakandé at the mouth of the River Nunez in French Guinea.

Near this spot now stands a monument stating that René Caillié left this place on April 19, 1827, on his way to Timbuktu. It was our old friend, the African Napoleon of Senegal, Faïdherbe, who erected it.

So at last, after all the years of dreaming and striving, René Caillié was on his way. He travelled at first with a little caravan, afterwards for a while with guides. Low-lying Guinea in those days was called the Land of Death. It was hot and wet, full of snakes, wild animals, and swarms of buzzing mosquitoes. They travelled on foot, of course, up through the Fouta Djallon mountains, on toward the legendary city of Timbuktu.

Caillié Reaches the Niger

Then at last, still within the borders of French Guinea, he reached the Niger at Kouroussa. It must have been a thrilling moment for him. As the crow flies he was already halfway to the goal of his journey.

You remember how Mungo Park described the Niger 'glittering to the morning sun'. Here is Caillié's description of it: 'About two o'clock in the afternoon we arrived at Kouroussa, situated on the left bank of the Joliba: a little before arriving a storm surprised us, my umbrella and the trees under which we took shelter protected me a little.'

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At that moment the sudden rain seemed to be more important than the Niger!

It was not until later in his narrative that Caillié showed a little enthusiasm for 'this mysterious river, about which the wise men of Europe are so curious to learn.'

We must leave Caillié here. It would be nine more months before he would see the Niger again. We shall continue his story in our next chapter, for it belongs in the French Sudan, now called the Republic of Mali.

Poverty in Liberty

When President de Gaulle of France offered to his overseas territories a free choice between full independence and membership in the French Community, the political leader of French Guinea, a former trade-union official called Sekou Touré, said to the president. 'We prefer poverty in liberty to riches in slavery.'

French Guinea was the only French territory that chose full freedom.

So the new republic got both the things it preferred, liberty and poverty. But Senegal, Ghana, Liberia, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia helped, and the country has lived.

Resources

Guinea has enormous quantities of buried wealth: bauxite, for instance, from which we get aluminium, and the richest deposits of iron ore in all Africa. It is often called a water treasure house also, for both the Senegal and the Niger rivers have their sources in the land.

Fatou Soumah and Damba Sylla belong to two of the 'races' that René Caillié came to know so well in Lower Guinea. Life among these people in their little villages has not changed much since the great explorer's day.

I AM A BAGA

BY FATOU SOUMAH

My Town of Koba

I WAS born at a clinic in the big city of Conakry fifteen years ago. Right after my birth Mamma took me back to our village of Koba, which is about sixty miles north of Conakry in the Circle of Boffa. This is in Lower Guinea, a flat country near the coast. The circles used to be important for the government of the country districts, but in our new republic they are not important any more. However, we still speak of them when we want to tell where our villages are.

Koba is only a little town. It is like many other little places in Guinea. There are elephants in the forest around it, many antelopes, panthers that prey on the antelopes, hyenas that howl at night, crocodiles in the rivers, many kinds of flowers and pretty birds, and monkeys everywhere. The people hunt the antelopes, the bush pigs, and the rabbits among the big trees of the forest. Sometimes they catch the rabbits in traps. They fish in the streams also, though the stream near our village is only a little one. The little children go naked and the big ones do not have much clothing either. But there is lots of fun in the village. The people sing the old songs and dance the old dances at night. The children cannot read or write, but they know how to say '*Bonzourcava*', which is the way they try to say the French words '*Bonjour. Ça va ?*' The women dress in bright colours, and are always talking together as they go about their work.

My village has about two hundred houses in it. They are

all much alike, but in ours we have benches, and a table, and iron beds to sleep on, though several children sleep in the same bed. All the family lives in one house. We cook outdoors on an open fire. The cows and goats have their own enclosures. The rice and manioc and groundnuts are kept in storehouses built above the ground to protect them from the dampness. Most of the people get their water from the little river, but we have a well at our house.

Koba is full of Fear

My village is always terrified of the evil spirits in the forest. All the people are Moslems, and there is a little mosque in the town, but many of the houses still have their jars of *gris-gris*, which they rub on different parts of the body to keep away the evil spirits. The spirits are often good spirits, however, and some of them live in animals. Sometimes a black snake is the protecting spirit, sometimes a crocodile in the river is the friend of the family. But often the people are afraid. Some men have evil powers. They can make you sick and even cause you to die, though they are not near you at all. If someone gets angry with you and hates you, he may go to one of these sorcerers and make bad trouble for you.

My Father Has Two Wives

My father's name is Bahki Soumah. Most of the people are farmers, but he used to work in a little store. He is sixty-five now, and his hair is white, so he does not work any more.

He has two wives. The first is Sambe Bangoura. She has four children, two boys and two girls. Fana, the oldest, is thirty-five. He is married, has two children, and has gone to Conakry to live. Morlaye is twenty-six, and he works in the post office at Conakry. The older girl is Massire, who is thirty. She is married but does not have any children. Bintou is twenty. She is married and has one child.

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The second wife is Mariama Bangoura. She has three girls and two boys. I am the oldest. Then come Kadiatou, a girl of thirteen, and Nafie, a girl of ten. They both help with the housework. The youngest are two boys. Ousman, six years old, and Morlaye, three years old. We do not speak of years, however, in Guinea. We say that someone has three winters, or six winters. The French word is *hivernages*.

We have a school in Koba, but none of the younger children has ever gone to school. Many of the people do not think it necessary.

My father's two wives work in our garden, where they grow food for the family: rice, manioc, groundnuts, bananas, oranges, sweet potatoes, and cola nuts. The cola nuts are big nuts about two inches long. People love to chew them. They are a little bitter and they make an orange juice in your mouth, but they keep you from getting hungry. People often take them along on a journey, and chew them in the middle of the day instead of eating food. So when you are going away you often get a cola nut as a parting gift from a friend. In the towns and in the big cities, too, you see people on the streets with trays of pink cola nuts to sell.

To School in Conakry

I did not know all this about my village when I was small, for when I was two years old I was sent to Conakry, the capital of the Republic of Guinea, to live with my brother Fana. But now I always go back to Koba during the long holidays, so I have come to know it very well.

I had six winters when I first went to school. This was a government school in the middle of Conakry. It was called the *École du Centre*. I stayed there for six years. Then for one year I went to the *Collège de Jeunes Filles* (the Girls' School). After that I took an examination and entered the Catholic School of St. Joseph de Cluny, a big school with about one thousand pupils in it, right opposite the cathedral

I AM A BAGA

in the city. I passed my examination and I have been there for three years now. I am in the fourth form.

My subjects are history, geography, science, literature, French, English, Spanish, mathematics, and physical training. I like languages best, but I want to be a nurse. We have a cinema in the school and we have educational films and other films that are nice for children. The children also have a private cinema just for them in the city.

I am a Boarder

I am now a boarder at the school and I have to get up at six o'clock. The Christian girls go to chapel at six-thirty. But I am not compelled to go for I am a Moslem. So at six-thirty I go to the study hall, where I remain until seven-thirty. At seven-thirty I have tisane and milk, bread, butter, and jam. Then I have a little free time to talk or to play.

From eight to eleven-thirty in the morning and from three to five in the afternoon there are classes. At ten there is a fifteen-minute break and at eleven-thirty I take a bath and play a little. Lunch comes at twelve-thirty, when I have rice and meat, vegetables, and fruit. I have fish on Friday. After lunch I go to the study room, and then to afternoon classes. Then I have something to eat, bread with cheese or butter and some fruit. After that I study until my seven o'clock dinner. Dinner is about the same as lunch. In the evening I play a little, study some more, and go to bed at eight-thirty. I sleep in a dormitory with five other girls and an older girl is in charge of us.

Thursday morning is our time for physical training, when we play volleyball and basketball. On Saturday afternoon there is no school, and we play and take care of things. Sunday I am allowed to go home to my brother's house, where I study, chat, and play, and take walks with my friends. We have indoor games, too. I have to be back at school by seven in the evening.

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Girls do not go to the mosque, but I say my Moslem prayers every morning and evening.

Holidays

In July, August, and September we have our long holiday and I go home to Koba. I help in the house, play in the village, and take long walks in the forest. There are *pirogues*, or dugouts, on the river, but I never use them.

I speak French and my native Baga language, but I cannot write Baga, for my people have no alphabet and no written language.

I AM A SOUSOU

BY DAMBA SYLLA

My People and My Town

THE biggest race in lower Guinea is the Sousou race, and this is my people. They tell me that my people came from the Sudan in the north, just south of the desert, and gradually moved down the big rivers until they came to the coast. Most of the people in Lower Guinea now speak the same language as my people and follow our customs.

My village is called Frigiadi in the Coyah Circle. This is about thirty miles away from Conakry on the main road to Bissau in Portuguese Guinea. The town is not far from the Konkouri River and just west of it. It is a very small town and the people are farmers. There is a mosque in the village, but there is no school there. However, the school is not very far away. I was born thirteen years ago.

All this part of Guinea is flat and low. There are many

I AM A SOUSOU

rivers that wander around in it. A great deal of rain falls, and the temperature is about the same all the year round. It is a good country for growing rice, but the rice fields sometimes have to be protected from the salt water with dykes. Most of the people grow rice as their main crop and my father does, too. But he also grows manioc, sweet potatoes, maize, taro, groundnuts, millet, and bananas. He makes palm oil from the palm oil nuts, and we have fruit like mangoes.

My House

My house in the little village was of mud and had an iron roof. It contained two big rooms and two small rooms. The floor was of earth, but we had wooden frame beds to sleep on, a table to eat at, and benches to sit on. Outside the house was a separate kitchen. The walls of the kitchen were of upright poles and the roof was of straw. The fire was laid in the middle of three stones placed on the ground on which the cooking pot was placed. Everybody in the village got their water from the river, but that was a job for the women and the girls. The boys used to fish in the river and go hunting for squirrels and rabbits and birds. The monkeys were everywhere in the woods, and there were hyenas, too.

When we sat together to eat the children were not allowed to talk much. After the meal we said '*Merçi*, Papa.' Then we bowed to Mamma, and said 'The food was very good, Mamma.' Then our parents said '*Merçi*' to us and we left the table.

Investing Our Lives in Our Country

Our new republic is asking all the young people to work in the fields, helping the farmers, who have never been able to enlarge their farms, and sometimes not even able to cultivate the fields they have. So at the beginning of July last year in many parts of the land the young people went

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into the fields and worked in them one after the other. In some places they enlarged the fields of the villagers by 50 per cent. After that the young people decided to help harvest the crops in December, too. Our new government calls this 'investing our lives in the country'. I was not able to help in this way, for I am working all day anyway, and studying every night. I will tell you about this later.

Life in Frigiadi

My father's name is Moussa Sylla. He is about forty-eight and he was born in my village. His crop is mostly rice, and he divides it into three parts. One is to eat, one is to sell, and one is to save for seed. My mother is Sonty Soumah and she was born in the village, too.

The oldest of the children is Fatou, a girl of eighteen. She is married, has two children, and lives in Conakry. Then I come, and after me comes Baga, a girl of ten, and Nancybe, a girl of eight. Baga, Nancybe, and I are all living now with our sister Fatou in Conakry. Finally, there are two very small children, a boy named Salifou, who is three, and a girl named Maferin, who is two. They are with my parents in the village.

I stayed in Frigiadi until I was seven. I did the things most boys do, though we did not play with the girls. We had our own games, like football, hide-and-seek, and a game we called *drapeau*, or flag. But we spent most of our time in the fields chasing away the birds and the other animals from the crops. We had high platforms, called *miradors*, to which we climbed by high ladders, and there we used to watch all day long. Whenever a bird or a monkey came we used our slingshots to frighten them away. Some of the birds came in great flocks to eat the grain, and they gave us a great deal of trouble. These birds were called *mange-mil*. The word means 'millet eater'. In spite of the work we had a lot of fun on our *miradors*. Most of us had only shorts to wear.

I AM A SOUSOU

I am a Carpenter's Helper

When I was seven I was sent to Conakry to live with my sister. I went at once to the Coleah School where I stayed for six years. Then I went to work in a carpenter's shop, where I am still employed as a helper. We make all kinds of furniture: chairs, tables, cupboards, and other things.

In the evening I always go to the Youth Centre on the edge of Conakry, where they have courses I take. I have problems in arithmetic, and French literature to read.

I have to get up at six-thirty in the morning, and at seven I have my breakfast which is bread and tea. At eight-fifteen I am in the shop and I work there until twelve, helping in all kinds of ways. Then I go home for lunch, and I have soup with rice in it, meat or fish, and bananas. I have water to drink. After lunch I take a nap, and then I go back to work from two-thirty to six. From the shop I go directly to the Youth Centre and stay until eight for my classes. At eight I go home and have my dinner, which is the same as my lunch. After that I go out to play with my friends until it is time to go to bed.

I want to be a teacher of mathematics, and I am hoping to get a scholarship so I can go to the college here. In another year I have to take the examination.

On Friday I go to the mosque to pray at one o'clock.

On Saturday I only work until one o'clock, so in the afternoon I can play football near the house. I never go to the cinema and I do not often ride in cars, but we do have a radio. The new government is now making us pay a thousand francs every year on it as a tax. I have never been anywhere except to Conakry and my village.

I speak French and Sousou. *Ymama* in Sousou means 'good morning'.

The Rice Harvest is a Happy Time

In the cities Christmas is a big holiday for us and my shop

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closes for several days then. But in the country the happiest time of the year is the time of the rice harvest in December. This is the dry season. The harvest does not come on any fixed day. That depends on the kind of season the people have had and on the will of Allah. The people also think it depends on the spirits of the earth. They have to be consulted. The day before the harvest the people pray to the earth spirit to give them a fine day and to protect them from the snakes which are stirred up as the people move through the fields.

The morning when the cutting begins the head of each family cuts off the first stalks with his sickle, and then the tam-tam sounds, which is the signal for all the rest of the people to begin their work. A line of people marches through the rice fields cutting the grain and the tam-tam follows them. The people sing as they walk on together, swinging their sickles. It is not thought to be polite for anyone to get too far ahead of the others. People are not allowed to whistle during the harvest, nor to gather dead wood. These things bring bad luck.

Everyone is very joyous when a good harvest is being cut.

7. THE REPUBLIC OF MALI

LAND OF THE LEGENDARY TIMBUKTU

Where did the Niger Go?

WE left René Caillié on the banks of the Niger at Kouroussa. He had passed through the Fouta Djallon, and in those mountains the river had its source. But where did it go? Mungo Park believed that it really was the Congo. Others thought it was the headwaters of the Nile. Still others were sure that it came from the great shrine of the Moslems, from Mecca in Arabia. One of the great Arab rulers of the region exclaimed, 'To see this river is to make a pilgrimage to Mecca! To bathe in it means that you will go to paradise!' Other Moslems said, 'No, it doesn't come from Mecca, it goes to Mecca!' One fantastic idea was that the Niger disappeared under the Sahara Desert and finally emptied into the Mediterranean in the north. The strangest theory was that in the end it was just swallowed up by its own fishes.

Caillié, however, felt certain that the river flowed into the Gulf of Guinea somewhere. And Caillié alone was right. But it was not to the Gulf of Guinea that he himself wanted to go. He wanted only to reach Timbuktu, to be the first European to get there. He threw a chip of wood into the river at Kouroussa and watched it float slowly downstream toward Timbuktu. He would have given all he possessed if he could have floated down the river himself. But he had no way of

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getting a boat at that time. So he crossed the stream on a little ferry and started out on his painful way again—on foot.

Caillié's Journey to Timbuktu

Caillié knew that he had little chance of reaching Timbuktu, if he was known to be a Christian. So he made up a fanciful story. 'I was born in Egypt,' he said. 'When I was still a child I was taken to France as a slave. Later I went with my master to Senegal and helped him in his business. Finally, my master gave me my freedom and now I want to get back to Egypt again to find my parents and my Moslem friends.'

The story was completely false, but it served its purpose. He had learned Arabic, he had studied the Koran, he wore Moslem clothes and observed all the Moslem customs. He passed as a faithful follower of the prophet Mohammed.

Still the journey was a terrible one. He walked barefoot for hundreds of miles. Ulcers broke out on his feet. He became ill with scurvy, an often fatal disease caused by the lack of vitamin C. For six months he lay seriously ill in a filthy native hut, eating what he could of the native food. The African menu looked rather like this:

Yams with stewed mice

Roasted rats

Preserved locusts

Flies cooked in meal

Dried caterpillars

Fried ants

Little dogs roasted whole in their skins.

Such dishes, of course, were delicacies. Fortunately for Caillié, ordinary food was flour made of a kind of grass seed, herbs, peanuts, rice, yams, and dried fish, sometimes spoiled.

It was a miracle that Caillié got better at all. But he did. He was then able to join a caravan, with which he reached

LAND OF THE LEGENDARY TIMBUKTU

the city of Jenné. There he gave his umbrella, which had always created a sensation among the natives, to a chief who in return arranged for him to travel downstream in one of the great dugouts that the French call *pirogues*. It was a huge craft, ninety feet long, weighing some sixty tons. They paddled down the Niger for more than five hundred miles, until they came to the port of Kabara, five miles from Timbuktu.

So at last, on April 20, 1828, he arrived in the place he had been dreaming of for almost twenty years. He had come all the way from the little French village of Mauzé to the fabled city of Timbuktu. But there he learned some startling news. Two years before, Major Alexander Gordon Laing, a Scot who had come across the desert from Tripoli in the north, had reached the city. It is true that he had been killed just after he started on his return journey. Still Caillié was not the first European to arrive. It was a great disappointment.

The City of Timbuktu

An old Arab saying runs like this, 'Gold cometh from the south, salt from the north, but words of wit and wisdom come from Timbuktu'. Timbuktu has always been the meeting place of the caravans. It is situated on the northern edge of the Sudan, that great belt of grassland and scattered, thorny trees that lies between the lush vegetation of the tropical Guinea Coast and the tawny sands of the desert. From the south came ivory and gold, gum arabic and ostrich plumes, and thousands of slaves also. Then, twice a year from the north came great caravans, laden with salt, mostly from Taoudemi in the centre of the desert.

Gold changed hands in Timbuktu, but certainly there were no heaps of it lying about at the street corners. The city was a place of low clay houses. There were no roofs of gold, no gold hitching posts for the horses. The shifting sands of the desert blew in gusts through the narrow streets.

THE REPUBLIC OF MALI

Still, Timbuktu had had its day of splendour. Colourful legends linger about the great king Askia Mohammed Ture, who became the ruler of the state of Mali and lavished his wealth on this town of Timbuktu. It was said that artists and scholars came to live there in large numbers. One of the town's visitors reported that a man's riches were taxed as much by the number of his books as by the number of his horses.

But that was three centuries before Caillié arrived.

Home Across the Desert

After a few weeks in this ancient city, Caillié joined a large caravan that was crossing the Sahara to the north. He had no money now, and he was treated like a slave. In the heat of the desert he travelled over the 'Land of Fear'. It was said that when the devils in hell offended Satan they were sent to this frightful 'Belly of the Sahara' for punishment. For seventy-five days Caillié suffered the torments of this hell before he staggered at last into Rabat in Morocco like a ragged beggar, burned black by the sun. The servants of the French consular agent there rudely turned him away from the door. Somehow he got to the French consul at Tangier with the amazing announcement, 'I have been to Timbuktu.' It was the longest journey that had ever been made in Africa by a European, 3,150 miles!

Ten years later, in 1838, Caillié died of tuberculosis on his farm in south-west France. He had seen three of Africa's great rivers, the Senegal, the Gambia, and the Niger. He had travelled along the Guinea Coast. He had crossed the great desert, he had visited Mauritania and Morocco. And he had been to Timbuktu. So died the greatest African explorer of his era.

The Republic of Mali

For a long time this great district, which stretches north

I AM A NOMAD

through the empty sands almost to Morocco and extends west to Senegal and south to the Fouta Djallon Mountains of Guinea, was called the French Sudan. It was one of the eight territories of French West Africa. Then in 1958 it adopted De Gaulle's proposal and voted to become a member of the new French Community, taking the name of the old Negro kingdom. It is now the Republic of Mali with its capital at Bamako on the Niger. It attempted to form a much larger Mali Federation with Senegal and other parts of the former French West Africa, but the federation almost immediately fell apart.

Besides Timbuktu there are other interesting cities. Gao, three hundred miles to the east, was the capital of Askia Mohammed Ture. Goundam, some sixty miles to the west, has houses that look like beehives. Bamako has its fine public buildings. Sansanding Dam, built by the French on the Niger, has reclaimed one hundred thousand acres of desert, where almost thirty thousand Africans have settled.

Mohamed ag Assadeck is a nomad. He belongs to the Tuareg, the blue-veiled people. He spends part of each year in the Sudan near the Niger, and part wandering around in the desert. So he is a fitting representative of this country, half desert and half Sudan.

I AM A NOMAD

BY MOHAMED AG ASSADECK

I am the Thorny One

My name is Mohamed ag Assadeck, which means Mohamed the son of Assadeck. We do not have any family names among

THE REPUBLIC OF MALI

my people. We are always either the son of someone or the daughter of someone. But we do have nicknames, and my nickname is Assinane, which means 'the thorny one'. I am twelve years old and I am a Targui. Taureg is the plural of Targui.

The Camp and the Village

My home is at Doya which is a Tuareg camp on a branch of the Niger River, near the road that leads from Goundam to the ancient city of Timbuktu in the Republic of Mali. This nomad camp is about thirty miles from Timbuktu.

My camp is a very small camp. There are only about ten tents in it, made of goatskin, and there are about fifty people altogether. The camp is right beside a little village called Tassacane. For several generations my people have been living near this village. We know all the people and like them very much. They are all farmers. My people are not farmers. We are herdsmen.

Since we are herdsmen we do not live at Doya all the year round. We stay there during the dry season, from October to June. Many trees grow near the Niger River in this part of the country, and the leaves give good pasturage for the animals. We have cows, goats, sheep, donkeys, and camels.

Another reason we like to live at Doya is that there are islands in the river where the grass called *bourgou* grows. In April we cut this grass and bring it to our camp for the animals.

My Tent

My tent is about fifteen feet in diameter, and round. It is about five feet high. We have no table or chairs, but there is one single low bed made of wood. We have mats and cushions on the floor, calabashes, and wooden bowls for food. The women cook out-of-doors over three stones on which the pot is placed.

The Tuareg

The tribe to which I belong among the Tuareg is called the Immidaghenes and they in turn are divided into groups. Mine is the Dag Bohedal. All the men wear veils that cover the lower part of their faces up to the eyes, and the veils are blue, so that we are sometimes called the blue-veiled people. The women and children do not wear veils, but the boys begin to wear them when they become men.

The Tuareg used to be a tribe of warriors that ruled almost all this country. They conquered many people and made them their slaves. These slaves were called *bellah*. But when the French came into our land they did away with the fighting and the slavery. All the *bellah* were freed, and those we had, left our camp to live in the nearby village.

We wander around the Country

In June the rains come and the grass grows green everywhere. Then we leave our camp and wander through the country with our flocks. We move every two or three days, usually for about three miles. The women ride on the donkeys with the small children. The men ride the camels or go on foot. The boys drive the flocks. Sometimes the boys ride behind the men on the camels.

If the camel is kneeling down on the ground it is easy to get into the saddle. When he gets up, he rises first to his hind knees, then to his foreknees, then he straightens out his hind legs and finally gets up on his forelegs. So you are pitched forward and backward until he stands up. But you can also get on his back when he is standing up by stepping on his neck. Then the camel will lift his head and let you get up into the saddle.

When we are wandering about we are always looking for both grass and water. Unless we find water we do not make a new camp, for the animals have to drink.

My Father is Dead

My father's name was Assadeck ag Ilili and he was always a shepherd. He had about seventy-two goats, twenty sheep, four donkeys, and one camel. It was very hard to make a living with just these animals. I was seven when he died and then my uncle took charge of the family. I went to live with him in the same camp. My mother has now married again.

My mother's name is Tadimata Azahara walat Anislun. *Walat* means 'daughter of'.

I have a brother Mohamed Ahmed who is fifteen. He has never been to school anywhere.

When I was small my job was to guard the sheep and to take the donkeys to water. But I also played with a wooden ball, which we tried to knock between two trees with wooden sticks.

The School for Nomads

One day the *commandant du cercle*, who is the civil governor, and the school authorities, came to my camp and selected me to go to the School for Nomads at Timbuktu. Two other boys had gone there before me, and five more have been chosen since I came. My parents did not want me to go. Most of the parents want their boys to stay in the camp. At first I did not like the school at all. I was homesick, I suppose. The classes begin with the sixth form, and I am now in the first. I have come to like the school very much. Next June I will take an examination, and if I pass I will go to a secondary school, which is called the Collège Moderne. It is at Dire, not far from Timbuktu.

I am now studying French, arithmetic, history and geography of Africa, science, agriculture, hygiene, and physical training. I play football at the school. Of all my studies I like history best, for I like to learn about the life of people in former times. Later, I want to be a teacher.

I AM A NOMAD

My day begins at six and my breakfast is rice porridge with milk. Then I have a half hour of exercises from eight to eight-thirty, when classes start that last until twelve. My lunch consists of rice with meat sauce. After lunch I do homework until two-thirty when classes begin again. They end at five, and then I have a half hour of Arabic. For supper we have millet cakes with a meat sauce. I always drink water. Then I play with the boys until 8 o'clock, when I go to bed. The director of my school is Mr. Idrissa ag Abdoul

I Live in Timbuktu

I do not sleep at the school, for I have friends in Timbuktu. So I sleep there in a mud house of one floor with a big door that is carved and studded. I sleep on a mat on the ground under a woollen blanket. Two other boys in the family sleep with me.

I speak my own language, which is called *tamachek*, and French.

Sometimes, but not often, I go to the cinema. We have an open-air cinema just at the edge of Timbuktu, not far from the nomad school.

8. SIERRA LEONE

THE LION MOUNTAINS

The Four Guineas

WE used to speak about our four Guineas. By this we meant, of course, the four British countries on the Guinea Coast. We were not thinking of Portuguese Guinea or French Guinea, but of Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast (now Ghana), and Nigeria. We cannot be quite sure where this word 'Guinea' comes from. Perhaps it was the name of an ancient country in the western part of the Sudan. Perhaps it comes from the town of Jenné, where Caillié exchanged his famous umbrella for a ride down the Niger in a *pirogue*.

A Lion and a Foot

Sierra Leone was the farthest point reached by Hanno, the Carthaginian explorer. That was about 500 B.C. The Portuguese explorers visited the country almost two thousand years later, about 1462. The name of the country, which means in English the 'Lion Mountains', comes from the fact that these men thought that the mountain at the back of the shore at Freetown looked like a lion.

On the map, however, the peninsula that shelters the magnificent harbour of Freetown looks like a foot, with Kent at the heel of it and Freetown at the toe.

Slaves and Freed Men

In the middle of the sixteenth century the English slave

THE LION MOUNTAINS

traders settled on the coast. Then during the next two centuries pirates used the land as a hideout.

Finally, in the late eighteenth century, the British people began to have a change of heart. A strip of land along the coast was sold by a native chief to a private British company; 351 freed slaves were settled on the shores of St. George's Bay. Sixty women, picked up on the streets of Plymouth, were sent out with them. So the city of Freetown got its name. This was in 1787, about twenty-five years before Harriet Beecher Stowe, who wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, was born. In 1808 the land was transferred from the private company to the British Crown. It became a British colony. Then in 1896 all the interior of what is now Sierra Leone was taken over as a British protectorate.

The Sierra Leonis

The people descended from those freed slaves are a strange group in many ways. They represent probably 150 different tribes whose ancestors were brought to England from many different parts of Africa. Most of them do not know where their ancestors came from, and cannot speak the language of their forefathers. The people in the colony of Sierra Leone are mostly Creoles, a mixture of white and Negro bloods. They are known everywhere in West Africa as Sierra Leonis, and they have developed their own language, a kind of pidgin English. These people have very little in common with the natives of the protectorate, and feel very superior to them.

Freedom for Freetown

England granted Sierra Leone its independence in April, 1961, but the Sierra Leonis are very unhappy about it. Only some thirty thousand Creoles live along the coast, but in the old protectorate, the capital of which is Bo, live about two million natives. The nature of the Negroes of the interior

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may be reflected in part in the old song that the Sierra Leone soldiers used to sing:

'The train to Bo
She no agree for go:
The engine she done tire
For lack of plenty fire:
The train to Bo
She no agree for go.'

'What is going to happen to us,' the Sierra Leonis ask, 'now that democracy is here? We are going to be outvoted all the time.'

Marina Eileen Nora Morgan is a Creole, and she tells us of the life of a girl in Freetown. *Mus cam fen me*, she says to us. This means in her pidgin English, 'You must come and see me.' John Lansana, on the contrary, is a native from the interior. He comes from the south-eastern corner of Sierra Leone, and of course speaks his own Mandi tongue. He says, *Yu wai kpele nya momda*, which means 'Greetings to you, my people.'

I COME FROM FREETOWN

BY MARINA EILEEN NORA MORGAN

I am a Creole

I AM a Creole and I speak the patois, which is a mixture of English and the native languages. I speak English, too. I am sixteen and I was born in the western part of Freetown. The house was a one-family, wooden house not very far from the centre of the city with a corrugated iron roof. I do not

I COME FROM FREETOWN

remember how many rooms were in it, but it was a medium-sized house. I have lived in Freetown ever since.

I Live with my Grandmother

My father, whose name was Willie Morgan, died when I was a year and a half. He worked for the government in the department of public utilities, in the section that had to do with electricity. My mother is Martha Morgan. Soon after my birth she went to Calabar in Nigeria for several years and I went to live with my grandmother in Freetown. My mother has never remarried, so when she came back from Nigeria she came to live with my grandmother, too. There are eight other grandchildren in the house besides me, some of them older than I and some younger. The oldest of the grandchildren is a teacher in one of the infant schools of the city.

The Annie Welsh Memorial School

I have two sisters and a brother. Yvette is about twenty-one, and she teaches English, geography, and history at the Annie Welsh Memorial School, where my mother is now secretary to the principal. This is where I go to school now, and my sister Iyaminde, who is fourteen, also goes there. This school was founded more than a hundred years ago by the Church Missionary Society. I have a younger brother Wilfred, who is twelve. He goes to the Cathedral Boys' School.

I first went to school when I was four. This was a public infants' school, called St. John's School. I remember how frightened I was the first day. I cried and wanted to go home. But on the second day it was all right.

In those early years I used to help my grandmother all I could, but I did not have to fetch water, for there was a tap in the house. Behind the house was a compound and we

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children used to play hide-and-seek there and in the house itself. We used to throw a rubber ball around, too. Indoors we played ludo, and snakes and ladders.

After one year at St. John's School the family moved and I then went for a year to Christ Church school. Then I changed to Tabernacle School where I remained until I was nine. For the next four years I was in the Cathedral Girls' School. At thirteen I came to Annie Welsh School. The first class is preparatory. The second is form one. I am now in form two. I am taking English, mathematics, geography, history, religious knowledge, and art. We have games outside like football, leapfrog, racing, and jumping. Of my subjects I like mathematics best. I want to go to Fourah Bay College, which is on top of Mount Aureol in Freetown. This is one of the colleges of Durham University. After I finish I think I would like to teach.

I Live in a Dormitory

I am living at the school, where fourteen of us occupy a single dormitory. Every day we get up at six-fifteen. I usually do some homework before breakfast, which is at seven-thirty. We have oranges, bread, butter, cheese, and coffee. Then I make my bed and help to sweep up the dormitory. School lasts from eight-thirty to three-fifteen. I have lunch at twelve in the school dining room, where I also help a little, sweeping the floor and washing some of the dishes. For lunch we have soup, fish or meat, rice and other vegetables, and water. When I get up from the table I usually have some fruit that I buy from the women who come in from the street to sell to us.

Walks with the Teachers

After school in the afternoon we go for a half-hour's walk with one of the teachers, sometimes as far as Cline Town at the western end of the city. On Saturday and Sunday we take

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a longer walk, often up the mountain to Fourah Bay College. When we come back I buy some more fruit, and from five to six-fifteen I do homework. Then I have supper, which is the same as the midday meal. We eat rice at every meal, often in the form of a stew with a hot sauce.

After supper I play ball until seven. Chapel comes from seven to seven-fifteen. This is led by a teacher except on Saturday when the pupils lead it. Then I have some homework to do until eight, and from eight to nine I am free. Then the bell rings, the lights go out, and we go to bed.

On Friday afternoon I always go to the cinema with other girls. A teacher goes with us.

On Saturday morning one of the girls goes to the market to help buy food for the school. The rest of us do housework, clean the dining room, the kitchen, and the dormitories. There is an inspection of our quarters at ten. Then we are free to wash our clothes if we want to. But we are allowed to send our clothes to the laundry and this is what I always do. In the afternoon at two we are permitted to have visitors, and they often bring fruit for us to eat. Then we take a long walk. We are free in the evening.

I have travelled a little in the protectorate. I have relations at Makem in the Northern Province, where they do a great deal of farming. I also have friends in Bo.

Christmas Carols

Early in December, groups of boys, usually four in each group, begin to wander around in the streets and sing Christmas carols. They usually get some money for this, which they may give to a church, though I think sometimes they keep it for themselves. I am always at home at Christmas. We have presents on the morning of Christmas Day, and a service in our church. We usually eat chicken at noon, and always have a special Christmas cake.

I COME FROM THE INTERIOR

BY JOHN LANSANA

My Grandfather was a Paramount Chief

I WAS born just west of the Mao River in the south-eastern province of Sierra Leone, about 213 miles from Freetown and not far from the border of Liberia. The little village had no hospital and nobody kept any record of my birth. So I am not sure how old I am. I do not think I am sixteen yet, but almost. The old women of the village were the midwives when children were born. Now the people are beginning to keep records.

My village is called Kotuma and it is in the Daru Chiefdom of the Kailahun District. My race is the Mandi, which is the principal one in that part of the country. We have a number of chiefs in a district, but there is always a most important one who is called the paramount chief. My grandfather used to be this paramount chief, but there was a dispute among the people about him. Some of them said he was a good chief, and some said he was not, so the government asked him to resign. They have not had any election since, so just now we have no paramount chief. I think the old chief was a good chief, but maybe I am prejudiced because he was my grandfather.

The towns in my country are usually named after some feature of the geography. *Koti* means stone. *Ma* means on. So the name of my village, Kotuma, means a place built on stones. And Kotuma is really very stony.

Village Houses

Of course, these towns are never planned. Someone builds a house somewhere. Then his brother builds beside him, and perhaps a cousin comes and builds beside him. When the children get married they build close by. So a little crowded village grows up. Everybody likes this, because the people are very sociable.

Our village has about a thousand people. Usually not only relations live close together but often friends, too. They are all considered members of the same family. All the wives live together in one big round house. There is a pole in the centre of it, and around this pole the water pots are set. Each wife has her own pot. Along the walls the wives sleep on low beds covered with grass. The very small babies sleep with them.

Each of the married men has a separate house, but the single men may share a house. The houses are all of mud with thatched roofs. During the rainy season the cooking is all done in the wives' house, and every wife has her own fire in front of her bed. They usually keep their clothes under the pillows. The benches and tables are made of cane.

In the dry season, from September to May, it is sometimes dangerous to cook in the house, and the village announcer will go around and cry out: 'The chief says no one must cook in the house from ten to five. Otherwise there will be a fine.' But he does not tell the hours that way. He holds out his hand, palm up, and lifts his middle finger above it. The length of the shadow thrown by the middle finger on the palm of the hand shows the time he means. Our people call noon *Folo ngu ndia*, which means 'sun in the middle of the head'.

So when there is danger of fire the women cook outdoors, usually under a cacao tree. We have coffee trees also and cola trees. The cola tree is the tallest and usually the coffee and cacao trees grow under it, because they like the shade.

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In my family no one eats the cola nuts, not because we do not like them, but because there is a kind of taboo about them for us. We are afraid to eat them.

The women always eat in their big house. But the men eat together in one of the men's houses.

Danger from Floods and Animals

Some of our houses are built high above the ground on poles because of floods. Some of them are built that way because of the danger of leopards that come to kill the animals. At night we drive the goats and sheep up into these enclosures. The cows stand just outside the houses and sometimes they are killed by the leopards. Once a leopard came into the village and chased a dog. The dog ran into a woman's house and the leopard jumped through a window after him. The woman screamed so hard that the animal got frightened and ran out of the place.

We have all kinds of monkeys and the baboons give us lots of trouble because they eat the coffee and cacao beans. The baboon bite is very dangerous. We see gorillas sometimes and the elephants around us destroy the banana plantations.

Life in the Village

This is a country of many little rivers. It is hilly and there are deep forests. It is a farming country, and people grow rice, sweet potatoes, cassava, and groundnuts. They have large orange, banana, coffee, and cacao plantations. We gather oil from the palmtree nuts also. We grow our rice on dry land and in the swamps. My province is one of the most famous in the country for diamonds. They are the small industrial diamonds. Recently people have been looking around near our village and they have even found some diamonds there.

I lived in my village for about ten years and I never went to school, because there was no school. I used to hunt for

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lizards, which we did not eat, and for wild rats, which we did eat. We caught the rats in traps, or with a noose on the end of a bent stick. But when we were hunting for rats we had to be very careful, for the snakes also like rats and some of these snakes are very poisonous. We ate monkeys, too, but we did not hunt for them. The men did that.

We used to fish in the streams. In the morning we dug worms for bait, and in the afternoon we used to go fishing, hooking the worms through one end so that they would still wiggle in the water. We often made long excursions, visiting other relations and eating some cassava that we took with us and some wild fruit that we found in the forest.

In my grandfather's time there used to be much fighting. One man would say to another, 'I want your house. If you do not give it to me I will fight you.' Or the chief of one village would say to another village chief, 'I want your village.' My background, you see, was a fighting background. We boys used to fight other small boys in other villages. We fought with our fists, of course.

When I was bigger I went to work with my father on his farm. At a certain age the boys always get for a present a big bush knife and the girls get a fishnet. So all the children begin to help the parents. The girls fetch water from the streams, go fishing with their nets, and help with the babies and the cooking. The boys sharpen knives, go hunting with the men, and begin to plant cassava in their own gardens.

My Father was First to get an Education

My father's name is Samuel Lansana, and his father was a warrior. My father was the first one in our village to get an education. He went first to a Methodist school in the chieftdom town of Daru. Then he went to Bunumbu school. Then he was trained as a teacher and taught for twelve years, after which he resigned and went into the native administration. He is now senior government clerk in

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Segbwema. My father became a Christian sometime during his training. He joined the Methodist church at Daru.

My mother's name was Mamaku, and she died in 1952. Both my parents were born in my village.

My oldest sister is Mary. She is married, and lives in Daru. She has one child. Then I come, and after me my sister Edith, who is in school at Segbwema. My young brother Joe is also in school there.

At Ten I started School

When I was ten my father transferred to the chiefdom town of Jojoima, which was not far away, and I started at the Methodist school there. It was an infants' and elementary school and I was there for one and a half years. Then I was sent to the Methodist school at Bunumbu, where my father used to go. I boarded there and went through standard three.

Finally, I transferred to Albert Academy in Freetown. I am in the academic section and next year I will be in standard four A. I am preparing for what we call our West African School Certificate.

My studies are general science (biology, physics, chemistry), mathematics (geometry, trigonometry, arithmetic, algebra), English, history, and literature. I like science best, and I want to go back to my own country and do scientific farming, growing rice and cacao, and breeding sheep, goats, and cows.

My Activities

I am a self-help student and I work for Mr. and Mrs. Phelps, who are Americans from Kansas City and Colorado. I clean the house, do the dishes, and wash the clothes. I work for two hours every day except Saturday when I work for four hours. I get paid for this work, but I turn the money over to the school. After I finish my work, I go back to the

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school and wash up before dinner at six. My dinner is rice cooked with the leaves of the cassava to which some meat is added to make a stew.

We have prefects and subprefects in each of the dormitories who work under the boarding-school master. I am a subprefect. I help to clean up the grounds. I used to do carpentering before I started to do housework for the Phelps'. On Friday evening I go to the Washingtonia Society, which is a debating club. On Saturday the self-help students all work, and I am at the Phelps'. But every other Saturday I am quite free in the afternoon and I can leave the grounds if I want to. I sing in the school choir and on Tuesday and Thursday we have choir practice.

On Sunday there is a Sunday school from nine to ten, and a church service from ten to eleven. Then our choir sings anthems. But sometimes I go out with groups of students who conduct services in the neighbourhood, teach the people to read and write, and bring the children to the Sunday school. I often teach and sometimes I preach.

This year I am the president of the Youth Fellowship which tries to bring the people of the town and the school together. We have different kinds of programmes, make visits to approved schools, and give concerts in these schools.

Holidays in my Village

When the long holidays come I always go back to my village. I speak Mandi and Kissy, which is spoken by the people right on the boarder of Liberia, the local patois, and English.

9. LIBERIA

AMERICA IN AFRICA

The Chin of West Africa

WE have travelled now all the way down the face of the African bulge. In Liberia we come to its south-western corner, to the point of the chin. Here the land actually begins to turn to the north-east. The early explorers at this point were sure they were rounding the southern tip of Africa.

The Grain Coast

Like all of Africa, Liberia has a past which is largely unknown. A Portuguese sailor, Pedro de Sintra, landed on the coast in 1461. Friendly natives gave him a precious gift, a quantity of pepper. Those were the days when a few pounds of pepper were regarded as a 'royal dish to set before the king'. De Sintra called the land the Pepper Coast. There were other grains that grew there, however, rice, for instance. On his second visit in 1462 he renamed the country the Grain Coast. And for the next three or four hundred years the Dutch, the French, the English, the Swedes, and others came to trade there.

The slavers came, too, but the native peoples were proud. They made very poor slaves. Many of them grieved to death or committed suicide when they were captured. So the demand for Grain Coast slaves was not large.

AMERICA IN AFRICA

Freetown, Libreville, Liberia

These three names are closely associated. Freetown, as we have already seen, was a place settled by freed slaves from England in 1789. Libreville (the name means 'free town' in French) was founded on the shores of French Equatorial Africa in 1849 by Negro slaves who had been taken from a slave ship and freed. In Liberia (the name means in Latin a 'place of freedom') a colony of freed slaves from America was established on January 7, 1822, on an island in the Mesurado River, which they called Providence Island. Negotiations had been carried on between representatives of the American Colonization Society and the native rulers for a couple of years before an agreement was reached for the purchase of the land. Finally the price was set. It was to be a few guns and gunpowder, a box of beads and a box of soap, a barrel of rum, a few hats and three pairs of shoes, some cotton cloth, some iron bars and iron pots, a dozen knives and forks and spoons. The whole was probably worth about forty dollars in American money at that time. It was certainly a bargain.

By 1860, ten thousand black Americans had been sent to Africa by various organizations. There were some serious clashes with the natives, but the colony continued to grow.

America in Africa

On July 26, 1847, the people declared their independence. The country was to be called Liberia. The settlement of Monrovia, named after the American president, James Monroe, became the capital. Buchanan was named after President Buchanan. There was a town called Philadelphia, and a county called Maryland. The constitution was like that of the United States. The American dollar was chosen as the official currency. Liberia was indeed a bit of America transplanted on the African coast.

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The Liberian Flag

The flag is very much like the American flag except that it has only eleven red and white stripes and only one star in the blue field. The stripes are for the eleven signers of the declaration of independence and the constitution. The dark blue field is meant to represent the dark continent of Africa and the five-pointed star the one Negro republic on the continent at the time of its adoption. The star is also supposed to be a guiding light to attract other Africans in the world who may want to go there. The red in the flag means courage, the white purity, and the blue loyalty.

The Liberian Seal

The seal of the republic shows the ocean with a ship under sail to remind the people how their ancestors came to the country. The sun rising above the horizon symbolizes the birth of the new republic. On the shore in the foreground are a plough and a spade as reminders that people must work to get food and minerals from the soil. There is a palm tree to represent the palm oil and other products of the land. A dove flies with an envelope in its mouth to show that knowledge must be spread through peace. On the seal is the motto of the republic, 'The love of liberty brought us here'.

The Country

The country of Liberia is a little north of the equator, about four hundred miles long and two hundred miles wide. There are five counties along the coast and in the interior three provinces.

The land is very hilly and blanketed with dense forests. It has the highest mountains in Africa west of the Cameroons. The Druple Mountains are ten thousand feet high.

No one knows exactly how many people live in this land, perhaps about 1,600,000. The descendants of the early settlers number about twenty-five thousand and there are

I WAS BORN IN MONROVIA

about forty thousand natives who have been converted to Christianity. These people are to be found mostly along the coast. In the interior, called the Hinterland, are the native tribes, still following their old tribal customs, and usually called the 'uncivilized' people.

Progress

The county has made little progress until recently, because it has been so poor. The capital has still only a few miles of paved roads, only a few buses and taxis. The country has only one short railway, only a few hospitals, and comparatively few schools.

However, the United States has constructed a great harbour for Monrovia, and a huge airport at Roberts Field. Some of the best iron ore in the world is being mined at Bomi Hills, and the Firestone Rubber Company has extensive rubber plantations. Education is making rapid strides. Little of all this has yet reached the Hinterland, but there can be no doubt that Liberia is now building for the future.

And here are Elaine Edwina Jones, who has lived in Monrovia all her life, and David Konoe Wright, whose father was a paramount chief of the Bassa tribe, to tell us of their lives and their ambitions in Liberia.

I WAS BORN IN MONROVIA

BY ELAINE EDWINA JONES

I am an Adopted Child

I do not remember my parents at all. My father, I am told, was a Lebanese trader named Jamil Khoury, and my mother

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was an African woman. Because of my parentage my skin is lighter than that of most Liberian children and I wear my long hair in braids. I was born in Bushrod Island fifteen years ago. This small town is really a part of Monrovia. It was not of any importance when I was born, but in 1947 and 1948 the United States built a great port there protected by breakwaters, where the largest ships in the world can anchor.

When I was a year old I was adopted by Rev. and Mrs. William Davis Jones. My father is the rector of Trinity Pro-Cathedral, a Protestant Episcopal church. My mother's name is now Laura Maud Jones. My sister is Enid Jones. She is sixteen and attends Julia C. Emery Hall, a school connected with the Bromley Mission at Clay-Ashland, not far from Monrovia. She has also been adopted by the Jones'. There are three other children that live with us, but they have not been adopted. Pauline, who is twelve, and Annie, who is six, go to the Assembly of God School, and Richard, who is seven, goes to the Monrovia Elementary Demonstration School.

We lived at first in a cement house with three floors which the church rented for its rector. It had a corrugated iron roof. Then the church built a new rectory into which we moved in 1952. This is a cement house with a cement roof. It is on one of the main streets of Monrovia and has six rooms and a bathroom besides a basement kitchen.

The Monrovia Demonstration School

When I was about four I entered the primary school of Trinity Parish. The school had about two hundred children and I stayed there for three years. Then I entered the Bromley Mission School, which my sister Enid now attends. Then I came back to Monrovia and entered the Monrovia Demonstration School. I am now in the seventh form.

I study arithmetic, English, reading, spelling, geography, general science, health, home economics, singing, and art.

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In our art class we make baskets, maps, and greeting cards; we knit and do water colours. On Mother's Day I sent my mother a card with a poem I wrote. It said:

'I am glad we have a special day
Set aside that we may say
"I love you and I hope
You will have a happy Mother's Day."
From your daughter
Elaine.'

Of all my studies I like music best.

My Mornings

I get up at five-thirty or six in the morning. After the family prayers, I make my bed, sweep my room, and help clean the house. Then I take my bath and dress for school. For breakfast we have porridge, white bread and butter, and sometimes butter pears. These butter pears grow on a tree beside our house. They are green outside, but inside they are cream coloured and very sweet. I drink milk (either canned or dried), though sometimes I have tea or cocoa. We have breakfast at about seven-thirty.

The school bus picks me up in front of my house, but it takes only five minutes to reach the school. At seven-forty-five we have devotions in our classroom (prayers, hymns, and Bible readings). Then there are classes from eight to ten-thirty. During the half-hour recess I swing or play volleyball or rings. Rings is a game where we dance in a circle. Usually I have something to eat, like doughnuts, groundnuts, oranges, bananas, plums, or sweets.

We have classes again from eleven to twelve-thirty, and then the bus takes me home. For lunch we have rice, meat with gravy or fish, plantains, cassava, or *addoes*. *Addoes* are something like yams. We boil them and crush them and eat them like mashed potatoes. We also have leafy vegetables

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like cabbage or lettuce or potato greens. Sometimes we have palm butter on rice. We never try to keep palm butter but make it fresh for each meal. You have to boil the palm nuts until they are soft, and then you beat them in a mortar. Afterward the kernel and fibre are washed and the thick oil that floats on the surface of the water is boiled down to make palm butter.

My Afternoons

In the afternoon I go to the A. P. Anderson Commerical School, where I study typewriting and the piano. This is a private school, though there is a state school attached to it. My afternoon classes last from two-thirty to five. In the afternoon I walk to and from school. It takes about twenty minutes each way. About eighty children go to this school and this is my second year there. I like the piano very much.

At the close of the afternoon school I sometimes run errands for my mother and sometimes I play games with my girl friends. We play mostly quiet games, like ludo. In ludo we throw dice and move the players along on a board according to the numbers we get.

My Evenings

Then I help my mother get dinner which is from six-thirty to seven. Dinner is a light meal, sometimes just *addoes* with stew and a cup of tea. Afterwards I help my mother with the dishes and sometimes listen to the radio. I like the musical programmes best, especially the request programmes when people write in and ask for special music. Sometimes in the evening I have lessons to study. Usually I go to bed at nine.

The only language I speak and the only language spoken in our home is English. My parents know no Liberian native tongue. They were actually born in Sierra Leone.

I always wear European clothing.

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My Sundays

On Sunday we have communion from seven to eight-thirty in the morning. Then from nine-thirty to eleven we have divine service. I always go to at least one of these services and sometimes I go to both. In the afternoon we have Sunday school from two to four, when there are separate classes.

Sometimes I go to the cinema. I like Roy Rogers films very much, but of all the films I have seen I liked *Joan of Arc* best of all.

My Travels

Once I travelled in a truck for a whole day into the interior to see a friend who lives in Konola. We went through a farming country with many rubber, orange, and palm trees.

I have been in a motorboat a number of times. When I went to the mission school I had to take a boat up the river. There was no other way of getting there. Now there is a road to the school.

We have holidays from the middle of November to the second of February.

Our President

August 24 is our Flag Day when we always have a programme in our school. William V. S. Tubman is our president. His third name is Shadrach and everyone calls him Shad. When he was last elected we had victory parades in our city. Many of the boys and girls daubed red paint on their faces and had their own little parade which they organized themselves. They marched and danced and sang through the streets with green branches in their hands and other green branches stuck on their heads. For the big parade there were many bands and people came from all over the country to march in it. The parades went right by our house.

I WAS BORN IN LOWER BUCHANAN

BY DAVID KONOE WRIGHT

My Father was a Paramount Chief

I AM David Konoe Wright, and I was born fifteen years ago at Lower Buchanan in Grand Bassa, Liberia. Grand Bassa is the middle of the five coastal counties. Lower Buchanan is not very big, but it is the most important place in the county. It is near the mouth of the St. John River and not far away is Upper Buchanan. The St. John River is about 250 miles long. It was discovered by Portuguese traders on the feast day of St. John, and that is how it got its name.

My father's name was Konoe, but I do not know his first name. He was the paramount chief of the Bassa tribe in this part of the country. He ruled over the two Buchanans and a number of other places also. I do not know my mother's name at all. I had an older brother who died about three years ago. His name was Nemily. I also have one sister, who is twenty-two. She is married to a dresser, or nurse, and has one child. I am the youngest in the family. My father died some years ago, but my mother still lives in Lower Buchanan, where she has a small farm. She has not married again and lives there alone.

Some of the people in Lower Buchanan are farmers, some are shopkeepers, some are government officials. Small boats can enter the mouth of the river, but not large boats. A sandy beach on the ocean side is good for swimming, but the surf is strong and high. I did not learn how to swim myself.

I WAS BORN IN LOWER BUCHANAN

The house where I lived was a big two-storied house, made of cement with a corrugated iron roof. We had four rooms downstairs and three upstairs. The kitchen was a separate building and there were separate rooms for the servants also.

In the centre of the village was a school, but I did not like it and would not go. My father used to send me, but I would always run away. He beat me for doing this, but the beating did not do any good. I still would not go.

I Travelled in a Hammock

What I liked best in those days was to visit other parts of the country with my father when he went out on his official visits. He used to travel in a hammock made of straw and carried by four men. The hammock had two long poles and there was a canopy over his head to keep off the sun. Since I was small it took only two men to carry me in my hammock, which was made in the same way. Sometimes we travelled by narrow forest paths for eight to twelve hours before we reached the village my father wanted to visit. There were no roads at all. When we arrived my father would have a conference with the subchief and the elders. He had ten chiefs under him and one crown chief. I was not allowed to go to these conferences. Instead, I spent my time with the other boys, running and jumping and playing draughts. A house was always assigned to my father and me when we made these visits and there we slept. Some of the houses in the villages were round and some were square. The clay from which the houses were made often came from termite nests, which we called 'bug-a-bug' hills. The roof was always thatched and the floor was beaten until it was very hard. People usually ate on the floor and slept on mats which were rolled up in the daytime. In the centre of every village there was always an open space for meetings and dances.

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Fishing and Hunting

At home in Lower Buchanan I played with the other boys, racing and jumping, soccer and draughts. There were other rivers beside the St. John near my home and I often went fishing in them. If I had good luck I would bring back a lot of fish. I made a bow and arrows also and went hunting with them. The arrows were just pieces of bamboo very sharp at the ends. I used to hunt for rats and lizards, but we did not eat them. I shot pepperbirds, too, which are white and black and very good eating.

The forest was full of game, and I have seen deer, monkeys, and hippopotami. The elephants were farther north. I never saw any. I saw a leopard once which some hunters had shot. The native hunters used to kill deer, wild boars, bush cows, and other animals, and there was usually plenty of meat for us to eat. We kept the meat by smoking it.

Our Food

Our usual food was made of cassava. We called it *duna*. In other parts of Liberia it is called *dumb-boy*. The root of the cassava is boiled and then allowed to cool. Afterwards it is beaten in a mortar until it is smooth and soft. Then a soup, made of groundnuts, or other things, is poured over it. On Tuesday and Saturday we usually had *fu-fu*, which is like *duna*, except that it is always a stew instead of a soup. We also had a great deal of palm butter. Then we had vegetables like yams, nuts like walnuts, and fruits like mangoes, bananas, oranges, papayas, and pineapples. We drank tea or water.

The Churches

The village had two churches, a Baptist and a Methodist. I went to the Methodist church. They had a boys' band there. I did not play in it, but I liked to listen. On Christmas Day we used to go to church in the morning and then we would have a big dinner and dance and sing.

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Mrs. Etta Wright

One day when I was eleven years old a lady from Monrovia came to the village to visit us. She saw me and liked me and wanted me to go with her to Monrovia. My father had died and my mother said I could go. The name of this lady was Mrs. Etta Wright, and I have lived with her ever since. Her husband had died and she had no children of her own, so she brought several boys into her home. She was a government official.

She has a big three-storey house and she lives on the top floor, where she has three living rooms and a bathroom. I live on the ground floor, and other members of her family live on the second floor. The house has concrete walls and a corrugated iron roof. It has verandahs running along the whole front of the house on the first and second floors. Mrs. Wright has servants, but I help to clean the house and take care of the dust bins.

School in Monrovia

When I came to Monrovia I began to go to school for the first time and I have been going ever since. At first I went to the College of West Africa, which is really not a college at all. I started in the second form of the elementary school and went through the third and fourth forms there. Then I left to attend the Monrovia Elementary Demonstration School, where I have been going for two years. I am now in the sixth form.

I get up at six and the first thing I do is to go upstairs to see if my mother wants some coffee. If she does, I cook it for her. Then I have my bath and eat my breakfast, which is usually bread and butter, fried fish, cassava, and Klim. At seven-thirty I leave the house and am driven in my mother's car to school. This only takes a few minutes.

School begins at seven-thirty-five with prayers and then we have classes till twelve-thirty, when school closes for

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the day. I have English, arithmetic, history, and science. At ten-thirty we have a rest period. Sometimes I bring an apple with me, but usually I buy my lunch, an orange, some cookies, and some *duna*. This costs about ten cents.

I like school very much now and of all my studies I like science best. If I had stayed in Lower Buchanan I might have been a chief like my father. I do not know. But now I want to be a radio engineer. I should like to go to the Booker Washington Institute in Liberia.

At school we have a band called the Rhythm Band, and I play the cymbals in it. We have played for President Tubman, both when he has come to visit us at the school and in his Presidential Mansion.

At the end of the morning the car comes to take me home.

The Y.M.C.A.

The afternoon I spend at the Y or on the football field. Ever since I came to Monrovia I have belonged to the Y, which now has a fine new building. I am a member of the Junior Hi-Y, and the treasurer of it. I have a bank at home in the form of the Lincoln Monument, where I keep the club money. We use the money to buy the uniforms and pay the expenses of our football team in which I play. On Saturday we have our club meetings. I like to borrow books from the school library. I always wear European clothes.

Most days I go home at five, have my bath, and eat my dinner. This is usually bread and butter, ham or dried fish, fried potatoes, bananas, oranges, or grapefruit.

Our Salala Farm

My mother has a farm and most of these things we eat are grown on it. But it is really a rubber plantation where my mother planted many trees last year. It is on the main road to the north at a place called Salala, close to the boundary

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between the Western and the Central Provinces. It takes us two and a half hours to get there. We usually go on Saturday and come home on Sunday night. I like to go very much, but I cannot go every week, as I take turns with two other boys who live with my mother. There are goats and sheep and poultry on the farm and a nice vegetable garden. I work on the farm when I am there.

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THE OLD GOLD COAST

Grain, Ivory, Gold, Slaves

FROM the Grain Coast of Liberia we travel eastward across the Ivory Coast, still called by that name, to the Gold Coast. In the pride of its newfound freedom the Gold Coast took the name of the ancient kingdom of Ghana in the western part of the African Sudan. East of the Gold Coast was the Slave Coast, where the independent states of Dahomey and Nigeria now lie.

All these names were at one time significant. Today, however, the traders no longer seek grain in Liberia, very little ivory is now exported from the Ivory Coast, and the slave trade is dead. Ghana alone still lives up to its old name. Some of the best gold mines in the world are found in this country, and next to cocoa, gold is still Ghana's principal export.

Elmina Castle

When the Portuguese discoverers gathered gold a few miles from the coast they decided that this country deserved something more than the marble pillars that Diogo Cão erected along the shores of Africa to mark his progress. In 1481 they sent a fleet of caravels with stone and timber to build their Castello da Mina, the castle of the mine. They wanted to protect their monopoly of the precious metal. And twice a year, from this fort now called Elmina, there sailed

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back to Lisbon on the Tagus a fleet of Portuguese ships laden with gold. For centuries Elmina was the centre of this gold trade. Other fortresses were built by the Portuguese and by other nations. For Europe this country was little more than a long string of coastal castles against which the heavy surf of the Gulf of Guinea beat. There was a cruel, merciless conflict here among these gold-hungry peoples.

Christiansborg Castle

The old castles remain today, many of them in ruins. Just outside the capital of Ghana is the fine Christiansborg Castle. The Portuguese were there first. Later the Danes took over and gave it its present name. Many times the castle changed hands. For a while it was a mental hospital. Then it became the home of the British governor general. Now it is the official residence of Kwame Nkrumah, the prime minister of the new republic.

Forests, and Rivers, and Resources

There is little high land in Ghana but there are many forests. The most important river is the Volta, which is formed by the union of the Black Volta and the White Volta. Recently, plans have been made to build a great dam across the Volta at Ajena. This dam will develop an enormous amount of electricity and create a lake 230 miles long, one of the great lakes of the continent.

In addition to the gold that attracted the early explorers, there are huge deposits of bauxite from which Ghana plans to make aluminium, and manganese, which is used to harden steel.

Ghana is a Rich Country

But its greatest wealth is still its cocoa. Ghana produces from one half to two thirds of the world's supply. Most of us drink Ghanaian cocoa and eat Ghanaian chocolate. It is

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cocoa, above all else, that makes Ghana comparatively prosperous. Cocoa trees grow best in shade, and usually they are planted under taller trees. Lately a very serious disease, called swollen shoot, has killed many of these trees. The only way to prevent the spread of it is to cut the sick trees down. It has been difficult to persuade the farmers to do this.

The Republic of Ghana

On March 6, 1957, Ghana became a republic. It was the first all-Negro republic to be founded in modern times. Previously it had been a British colony and protectorate. Now it is a dominion within the British Commonwealth. In addition to the coastal areas there is a district called Ashanti in the centre, and in the north the former northern territories.

Just east of Ghana is Togoland, which used to be a German colony. After World War I, it was divided between France and England as League of Nations mandates. After World War II, the mandates became United Nations trust territories. But when Ghana became free, British Togoland became a part of the new nation. A few years later French Togoland became a free member of the French Community.

Accra is the capital of Ghana, but it has no port. Takoradi to the west has the best port in the land. Tema, a few miles to the east of Accra, has also been developed recently.

Kwame Nkrumah

The new prime minister of Ghana lived as a child in a hut of wattle walls plastered with mud. He was born on Saturday and so he was called Kwame. All boys born on that day of the week got that name. He was the first child, and first-born children in his tribe were not thought to be very bright. This Saturday's child proved that the old idea

I SHALL BE A KING SOMEDAY

had no foundation in fact. He studied in America for ten years and then returned to his native land to win freedom for his people.

Daniel Ossom Mate Kole will be a native king when his father dies. The king's office always goes to the oldest son. His family has been very prominent in the past history of the Gold Coast, and Daniel may well be very prominent in the future history of Ghana. Joan Addo is a lovely girl of humbler origin. She is typical of the country because her father had a cocoa farm.

I SHALL BE A KING SOMEDAY

BY DANIEL OSSOM MATE KOLE

My Father is a King

My name is Daniel Ossom Mate Kole and I was born at Odumase Krobo. This is about forty miles east of the capital, Accra. I am fifteen years old.

My father is Nene Azzu Mate Kole and he is the king of the most important African tribe in this part of the country, the Manyo Krobo. The Manyo are a branch of the Krobo people. Under my father are subchiefs and headmen for different groups or clans. My father has been decorated with the Order of the British Empire and the King's Medal for Chiefs. He attended the first African conference for chiefs in London in 1948. and I have a picture of him and other chiefs taken with King George VI at Buckingham Palace.

When my father goes to any official meeting he walks under a large umbrella held by an attendant and at every important gathering he wears a gold crown on his head.

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Someone else holds a long staff before him as a sign of his authority.

However, he does not rule alone. He has a council of elders who make the decisions. My father gets up every morning at five and at six or seven each of the elders comes to wish him good morning and to see if there is any important business for them to talk over together. If there is, they decide what is the best time for the meeting.

My mother is Matilda Mate Kole. I am the oldest child in the family, and since in my tribe the office of king is hereditary I shall be the king myself someday if I live.

Next to me is a girl of twelve, Adjei David. Then comes a boy of nine, Mate Ebenezer. Next is a girl of seven, Koleki, and then there is a girl of six, Koyo. The baby is a girl of two named Mamle.

The History of My Family

My great-grandfather, Mene Mate Kole, was the first chief to conquer the Ashantis, the big African tribe that lives in the centre of Ghana. The Ashantis used to be very warlike, and they were always attacking the tribes to the south in order to get slaves. There were many wars in which my people took part, and the Ashantis caused the British very much trouble also. Finally, a British major general, Sir Garnet Wolseley, decided to invade the Ashanti country. He succeeded in capturing the capital, Kumasi, and it was the first time the Ashanti capital had been taken. My great-grandfather entered Kumasi with him.

My father has a sword given to my great-grandfather by Queen Victoria. The hilt is studded with gold.

My grandfather was also active in fighting the Ashantis in the war of 1895, when Major Robert Baden-Powell led the African forces and Sir Francis Scott was the commanding general. This time, too, they entered Kumasi, and forced the Asantehene, or ruler, who was named Prempeh, to take

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off his sandals and embrace the feet of Sir Francis as a sign that he surrendered.

Major Baden-Powell afterwards became Lord Baden-Powell and in 1908 formed the Boy Scout movement in England. One interesting fact is that in this war he found my grandfather's Krobo scouts were using a left-handed grip, so that they would know each other, and Lord Baden-Powell introduced this left handshake into the Scout movement. My grandfather was knighted for his services.

The Compound where I Live

I was born in a big stone house more than one hundred years old, with two floors and long verandahs on both sides of both floors. On the second floor are five rooms and on the first floor seven. The family occupies the whole house, but around the compound are eight or ten small houses where my father's servants live.

There are about two thousand people in my village. Most of them are farmers, growing cocoa, yams, cassava, plantains, and other fruits and vegetables. The town has several schools, a teacher-training college for girls, a community house, and a hospital.

About two miles from my home is a high, rocky hill, where our village used to stand. It was very easy to defend. Some of my ancestors are buried there.

I go to Boarding School

I go to the Presbyterian Mission School which is another two miles away on another hill. It is a boarding school and I live there, though I get home at least once a week to visit my family. At school we all get up at five-thirty every morning and after we are dressed we have physical training. Then we have our baths. From seven to eight we have a study period and from eight to eight-fifteen we have worship with prayers and hymns and Bible readings.

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From eight-fifteen to eight-forty-five we have Bible study. Then from eight-forty-five to nine-fifteen we have breakfast which is always rice with tea or water. From nine-thirty to eleven-thirty we have arithmetic and English. Then we have a rest period from eleven-thirty to eleven-forty-five when we sit around quietly or read. From twelve to one-thirty we have English grammar, geography, history, and civics. From one-thirty to two-thirty we have lunch. We usually have *cancay*, which is a staple food among my people. It is made of ground corn. We make it into balls and boil it in water. Then we leave it overnight and in the morning wrap it in cornhusks until we are ready to eat it. We eat it with meat or fish or sugar or fruit. Sometimes we have vegetables like yams.

From two-thirty to three-forty-five we have another quiet time, when we can sleep or take walks in the bush. From three-forty-five to six I either work on the school farm or play. When I work I hoe or rake or weed or plant. I play soccer and race and jump. I do not know how to swim.

Of all my subjects I like English best. But I speak Krobo, Engu, Ga, and Twi also.

From six to six-thirty I have singing practice. We have supper from six-thirty to seven when we eat *cancay* again with rice or fish and yams. I drink water. From seven to eight-forty-five I study in the classroom and at eight-forty-five I go to bed. Forty-three of us boys sleep in one big dormitory. No older person sleeps with us. We have our own rules and at night we are quiet.

I belong to a boxing club, but I do not like boxing.

On Sunday at eight-fifteen we have singing practice again. Then from nine to eleven we have a church service just for the boys of the school.

In school we wear a khaki uniform, shorts and shirts. For church we wear white shorts and shirts. I never wear any other kind of clothes.

I WANT TO BE A TEACHER

I play a kind of drum called a *bann*. I very seldom go to the cinema. Sometimes I go to Accra, and sometimes I go on excursions to the Volta River which is only a few miles west of my village. But I never fish and I have never been on the river in a boat.

I WANT TO BE A TEACHER

BY JOAN ADDO

My Father Grew Cocoa

My name is Joan Addo and I was born fifteen years ago at Korle Bu Hospital in Accra.

My father was Emmanuel Addo and he was a cocoa farmer until he died. My mother's name is Beatrice Aye, and she now lives at Nsawam, near Accra. I have an older sister, Janet, who is sixteen. She goes to a Presbyterian school at Nsawam. Then I come, and next is my sister Mary, who is twelve and attends the same school as Janet. Then comes my brother Charles, who is ten, and my brother Victor, who is eight. They both go to the same Presbyterian school. Youngest, is my brother Emmanuel, who is five and too young to go to school.

My father's cocoa farm was in the village of Suhum. He had about fifty acres. He was lucky. He never had any trouble with swollen shoot.

We had Two Houses

When I was born my family had a big house with seven rooms at Aburi Akwapim. It was made of concrete and all

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the rooms were on one floor. There was an outside kitchen and lavatories in the same compound. Then we had a smaller house of four rooms with mud walls and thatched roof, in the village where my father had his farm.

I lived in these two houses until I was six. We had European furniture. I used to fetch water, wash dishes, and sweep the house. Often I used to help my mother carry food to the market at Suhum. Every African girl learns to carry a heavy load on her head. My mother and I used to carry yams, cassava, plantains, and cocoa yams on our heads to market. Cocoa yams are the staple food in some parts of Ghana. They are white tubers and grow in the ground like potatoes, but they are usually bigger. We boil them or fry them.

I want to be a Teacher

When I was eight I went to Mampong-Akwapim, which is thirty miles east of Accra. Until I was thirteen I attended the Presbyterian Girls' Boarding School there.

Then I went to Bekwai in Ashanti, where my cousin, Rev. L. A. Kwansa, was the minister. I want to be a teacher, and as I had completed my work in the middle school I was put into a school at Bekwai for some practice teaching under the supervision of another teacher. I was there about nine months teaching in Form Three. The school was five miles away from a place called Kokofu and was for boys and girls. It was called the Kokofu United Presbyterian School.

To Accra

Then my cousin was called to be the Synod Clerk for the Presbyterian Church of what was then the Gold Coast and I went with him to Accra to live. His house is a lovely house about three quarters of a mile from Christiansborg Castle. While in Ghana there is no such thing as legal adoption, my cousin thinks of me as his daughter.

I WANT TO BE A TEACHER

I am now studying at home preparing for the college entrance examination that will come soon. The examination will be in English, arithmetic, the Bible, and general intelligence. In the last subject they may ask us questions about anything in the world. I am hoping to pass this examination and to go to the Presbyterian College in Agogo in Ashanti.

Homework and Study

Every day I get up at six. I sweep the yard and the kitchen, light the fire, and prepare the breakfast, for I do most of the housework for my cousin. We eat *cancay*, and a porridge which is also made of maize. Sometimes we have cassava or yams, which we boil or fry. Usually we have some fruit, bananas or oranges or pawpaws. We drink tea or coffee or cocoa.

After breakfast I go to the market and do my shopping. I go by bus, for it is two miles away and the shopping takes an hour and a half. After I return I begin to get ready for lunch at twelve when the children come home from school. The rest of the family have lunch at two-thirty. I have about six people to cook for. In addition to the shopping and the meals I usually have washing and ironing to do in the morning.

Every noon we have *ampesi* and *fu-fu*. The *fu-fu* is made by boiling cassava and plantains and coco-yams for a little while, and then pounding them in a mortar with a pestle. One person pounds while the other keeps turning the dough with her hand, which she wets with water. When the mixture is soft it is made into big balls and placed on a plate. Most Africans eat it with their hands, breaking off a bit and dipping it into a stew or a soup. The *fu-fu* is never chewed, it is always swallowed. The stew we eat with it is called *ampesi*. It is made of meat or fish with rice or other vegetables.

After lunch I wash the dishes, sweep the kitchen, and

GHANA

begin to get ready for dinner. I usually have more ironing and some sewing to do. An African woman is busy most of the time, and if she has babies she works all the time from morning till night.

For dinner we have rice and stew or soup, bread, yams and tea. Afterwards I wash the dishes. From seven-thirty to ten-thirty I study. My cousin helps me. I go to bed at ten-thirty.

On Sunday I go to the Presbyterian Church which is just across the road from my house. I do not play any musical instrument but I like to sing very much, both church hymns and native songs. I have no time to play with the other girls. And I do not go to the cinema often.

My Excursions

I have visited Christiansborg Castle. On the beach close to the castle is a rock called Sacrifice Rock. There, every year at the time of the yam festival, the people used to put a young girl to death so that the crops might not fail.

Sometimes I go to the beach at Accra and watch the Fante boys bring the cargo ashore from the ships that anchor off the city. There is no harbour and the surf is very bad, but they say there is no surf in the world bad enough to drown a Fante. All along the west coast of Africa the Fante are found with their three-pointed paddles and their surf-boats. Sometimes they bring in boatloads of cement. The moment they get close to the shore coming in on the surf, all the paddlers leap overboard and the heavy bags of cement are carried ashore on their heads. The men are wet most of the time, for the surf often rolls right over their heads, cement and all.

Sometimes I go to Tema, which is about fifteen miles away, where they have been building a new harbour. The fish there is very good and very cheap. It is expensive in Accra.

I WANT TO BE A TEACHER

I Speak Five Languages

I belong to the Akan tribe to which all the people of Ashanti belong. The people around Accra speak Ga. I speak five languages: Akan, Ga, Ewe, Twi, and English.

Usually I wear African clothes. The top garment is called a *kaba*, and looks like a little girl's dress. Underneath what looks like the skirt of this *kaba* I wear a long garment called a *fam-ntama*, which really means the 'down cloth'. It hangs right down to my feet. When I come of age I will wear another garment over my shoulders and will dress my hair.

11. DAHOMEY

LAND OF THE WOMEN WARRIORS

Early History

THE country was visited by the Portuguese explorers, but there were no attempts to establish trading posts on this inhospitable shore until the French made a treaty with Gezo, king of the Dahomey in 1851. The kingdom had been founded long before, probably about 1625 A.D., and it became very powerful. It had two very strange and conspicuous ways of life.

The 'Customs'

These 'Customs', so called, followed the death of a king. There were two kinds, the Grand Customs and the Minor Customs. When the king died many people were put to death, so that he would have plenty of wives and servants and attendants in the spirit world. In 1791, five hundred men, women, and children were killed at the death of the ruler.

It was a very exciting occasion, except for the victims. The people danced and sang. The leaders made speeches and prepared great feasts. The victims were mostly prisoners of war. They were dressed in calico shirts with red trimmings. Some of them were taken to the top of a high platform and then hurled to the ground, where they were killed by the natives. Others were slaughtered on the king's grave. Still others were butchered in the palace. The king's bedroom

LAND OF THE WOMEN WARRIORS

was paved with skulls, and the walls of the palace were decorated with them. The skulls of conquered kings were used as drinking cups.

The Minor Customs took place from time to time, so that the dead king should have fresh attendants.

The Amazons

The other peculiarity of the kingdom was the training of women as soldiers. In old Greek myths we read of a nation of female warriors, who were called Amazons. In Dahomey there were thousands of these women, who were said to be the best fighters in the army. Each regiment of them had a special uniform and distinctive badges. They were armed with bows and arrows and with muskets. In the autumn manoeuvres they used to charge barefoot through a hedge of thorny acacias. They came through torn and bloody but victorious. They captured a village by silently surrounding it during the night and then suddenly attacking it in the dark before the dawn.

The Amazons died out when the French came to occupy the country.

The Slave Trade

Dahomey and Nigeria belong to the Slave Coast. The kings of Dahomey fought with enemy tribes to get prisoners, whom they usually sold to the white slavers. This, after all, was a happier fate than to be slaughtered in the 'Customs' or to be eaten in some cannibal feast. Since there were always tribal wars in the interior of Africa, people have pointed out that the slave trade may have saved more lives than it took.

Art in Dahomey

Very little good native art is found in Africa, but this part of the Guinea Coast did produce some very exceptional

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things. The people of Dahomey carved birds and animals out of wood. Sometimes these carvings were then covered with thin sheets of brass. The people made similar models of animals and plants from iron, and figurines from copper. Skilled workers learned how to cast gold and brass earrings and arm bands.

The Smallest Territory

Dahomey was the smallest unit in French West Africa, a long sliver of a country with an average width of only fifty miles. But it was the most densely populated. Today it has about 1.7 million people, and many tribes. The ancient capital was Abomey, but the modern capital is Porto Novo, and the principal seaport is Cotonou.

The country became a republic and a member of the French Community in 1959.

We shall now visit Cotonou, and let Carroll Richard tell us what life is like today in Dahomey. Carroll is French, but most of her most intimate friends are Africans.

A FRENCH GIRL IN DAHOMEY

BY CARROLL RICHARD

From Marseilles to Cotonou

I WAS born in Marseilles eleven years ago, but I have lived most of my life on the Guinea Coast of Africa. My father has a big store at Cotonou, which is in the south of Dahomey on the shore of the Gulf of Guinea.

My mother, Vivienne Richard, was born in Hanoi, Indo-China, and lived there for fifteen years. My grandfather was

A FRENCH GIRL IN DAHOMEY

a doctor in the French army and was stationed there. My father, Edouard Richard, also served in the French army and when he was sent to Hanoi he met and married my mother. Then they returned to Marseilles and I was born there. My father was himself born in Scotland, for his mother was Scotch, though his father was French.

I stayed in Marseilles for one year, and then we all came to Cotonou, where my grandfather Richard had a store. When Grandpa died Papa took over the store and now runs it with Mamma's help. Sometimes I help, too. The store is on the main street of Cotonou and is a kind of small department store. We sell groceries, dresses, hardware, books, musical records, and things like that.

My Life at School

Not many French girls live in Cotonou, and when I was young I played most of the time with my older brother. His name is Patrick and he is now seventeen. He goes to the Collège Opied, a Catholic school for boys which is very near our house. Now I have a younger sister Arielle, who is six and goes to Notre Dame des Apôtres (Our Lady of the Apostles).

This is the school I first went to, when I was four years old, and I stayed there for seven years. Then I went to the Réseau Benin Niger school, a railway school for railway employees. It is really a government school, but I was allowed to attend. It is only five minutes' walk from my house and I went there on foot. I was there for a year and then I went back to Notre Dame des Apôtres in 1957. There are many Africans in my school, and I have some very warm friends among them. They belong mostly to the Mina race, which is the most important tribe in the south of Dahomey, but I do not speak their language. I speak only French.

At school I am studying the history and geography of Africa, French, science, and arithmetic. I like the history of

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Africa best. When I get older I should like to work in the store. I like selling things there.

In the morning I am up at six and have coffee, bread and butter for breakfast. School lasts from eight to eleven-forty-five and from two-thirty to five-fifteen. At noon I have a lunch of meat, vegetables, and fruit. I have water to drink. On Friday I have fish. After lunch I rest for a while before I go back to school. Then after school I have a little snack of bread and butter and do some homework for an hour. Then I take a walk in the town with my sister. After that I study my lessons for an hour and at eight I have my dinner, sometimes eggs, fruit, cake, and cheese, with water to drink. I go to bed at nine.

The Town and the Beach

Opposite our store is a big market, where the natives bring their fruits and vegetables and meat and cloth and other things to sell. It is always a very busy and crowded place. It is very interesting to watch the people there.

Most of the white people live down near the shore with big houses and gardens. The Africans live in the back of the town away from the shore. Their houses are, of course, much smaller and simpler than the houses of the whites.

The beach is a nice place to visit. Cotonou has not any harbour, but there is a large iron pier that runs out into the water. The ships anchor offshore and discharge their cargoes by means of small boats that run to and fro from the pier to the steamers. Sometimes big passenger boats arrive also, boats from the French *Compagnie Chargeurs Réunis* and other lines. They have to use the small boats, too, to land their passengers.

The beach itself is wonderful, with fine, clean sand, and it runs from east to west farther than you can see. The breakers are always rolling in from the sea. I like to watch them dashing on the shore.

A FRENCH GIRL IN DAHOMEY

Weekends

We have no school on Thursday or Sunday. On Thursday morning I usually go to the beach to bathe and play in the sand with my brother and sister. Near the beach there is a club called the Cercle Amical Sportif, which means the friendly sports circle. This is a private club, and we often go there on Thursday afternoon. We play tennis and other games. Then in the evening I have my lessons to do for school.

On Sunday I usually go to the six o'clock mass and then I go to a dancing class taught by a Frenchwoman. Afterwards I help my parents in the store, which is called Valla et Richard. Mr. Valla is dead now.

Every Sunday afternoon the family goes off together. We have a plantation about eight miles east of the city. It is right on the shore and we have about two hundred coconut trees there. My father keeps about five men to take care of the place and they gather coconuts all the year long. We do not have a house at the plantation, but we have a wonderful time bathing in the sea and playing on the shore. On Sunday evening I am at home. I read and talk with the family, for I do not have any lessons to do then.

Our House

Our house is upstairs over the store. We have six rooms, four of them bedrooms. The house is a stone house. The mosquitoes are a little troublesome and we have to be careful of malaria, but at night we sleep under mosquito nets. There are no screens on our windows, but the mosquitoes do not bother us in the daytime. Of course, this whole coast is very hot and humid. We have a little dry season in January and at night the *hamadan* blows. This is a cool wind from the north. After the little dry season it gets very hot again, when the rainy season begins. The long dry season comes in the summer, and then again it is cooler.

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Holidays

Our long holiday lasts from the sixth of July to the middle of October. During this holiday I always go to France, either to Marseilles or to Sète in the south of France. I have an aunt living in Sète. I fly by Air France from Cotonou to Niamey in the Republic of the Niger, and then across the desert to Marseilles.

Two years ago I went with my parents to England. My father has a car and we took the car in a ship to France. Then we drove the car across France to the Straits of Dover, shipped it over the Channel, and then travelled around in it. We went through Canterbury, where I saw the big cathedral, then to London, and north as far as Edinburgh. I liked London best of all. I saw the beefeaters at the Tower of London, and I saw them changing the guard at Buckingham Palace.

The big holiday of the year here is the fourteenth of July, or Bastille Day. But, of course, the religious holidays are important also, like Easter and Christmas. At Christmas we have a Christmas tree and we put our presents under it. We also have a big cradle with many figures.

12. NIGERIA

WHERE THE NIGER REACHES THE SEA

Mungo Park's Last Journey

IN June, 1797, Mungo Park, you remember, returned to Pisania in Gambia from his first hazardous journey to the Niger River. He had proved that it flowed eastward, but he still did not know where it went.

For almost eight years he waited impatiently at home in Scotland for another chance to continue his exploration. Then at last, on January 31, 1805, he was able to set sail for Africa again. He spent a couple of weeks on the island of Gorée and then went on to the Gambia. It was not an auspicious start. Red tape in England had delayed him, so that he was setting out in the worst time of the year.

On his first journey he had had one man, a boy, and a donkey. Now he had thirty-five soldiers, two seamen, and one officer, all Europeans, and a few natives. There were forty-four of them altogether. Every man had a donkey and the leaders had horses. But the Europeans knew nothing about the tropics and were ill-fitted to face its dangers and difficulties.

From the very beginning they had trouble. The men fell ill with heat exhaustion and dysentery. The natives, believing that such a big caravan must be very rich, pounced upon the stragglers and stole everything they could lay their hands on. Wild animals were everywhere. Lions attacked

them. One of the men was seized by a crocodile. The sick prayed for death, and the wolves devoured them when they died. Only seven of the thirty-eight Europeans were left when they reached the river.

At Bamako, Park and those who had survived started down the Niger in canoes. Several times they were attacked by natives on the banks of the stream. They reached the Bussa rapids. Here the river divided into three channels. Unwittingly, Park chose the worst of them and his canoe struck on a hidden cleft rock. The natives now attacked from both sides with spears and arrows. Finally, Park and three others jumped into the river to escape the rain of missiles. They were never heard from again. One of the Negro slaves escaped to tell the tale.

Hugh Clapperton and the Landers

To the end Park believed that the Congo and the Niger were the same stream. The argument was simple. Here was a river now flowing to the south. Its outlet was unknown. In the south was another river that flowed into the sea. Its source was unknown. It was very easy to make a single river of them on a map.

In 1825 Hugh Clapperton set out from the Niger coast near Lagos with another little company of explorers. They travelled by land and reached the Niger near Bussa. Then they went on into the interior. Within a month all but Clapperton and one of his servants had died. At Sokoto, in what is now north-western Nigeria, Clapperton himself died, on April 13, 1827. Another brave man had paid with his life for our present knowledge of Africa.

Three years later, the servant, Richard Lander, and his brother John Lander, started again from the coast and reached Bussa by land. Then in two native canoes the brothers embarked on the 'Dark Waters', as the Niger was often called. They passed the mouth of the Benue, the great

WHERE THE NIGER REACHES THE SEA

river that flowed into the Niger from the east, and finally they reached the Atlantic. Everyone who knew this coast was acquainted with the Oil Rivers, but no one had ever before suspected that these little streams that poured into the Bight of Benin along a hundred miles of coast were the many mouths of the mighty Niger's delta.

Two thousand five hundred years after Herodotus mentioned the Niger its mystery had been solved.

The Bight of Benin

A bight, of course, is an open bay caused by a bend in the shore line. The land here was a deadly district in the old days before men knew that the mosquito brought malaria and the tsetse fly sleeping sickness. Sierra Leone was the first place on the West African coast to be called the 'White Man's Grave', but the name came to be used for the whole Gulf of Guinea and nowhere more appropriately than here.

'Beware, take care of the Bight of Benin,
One comes out though forty go in.'

It was the Portuguese who braved the climate and the insects and started to trade with the people of this land. That was in 1472, but in the next three centuries several of the European nations competed with each other for the profitable slave trade, and this was the most important part of the whole Slave Coast. A slave could be bought there for two pounds and sold for sixty-five pounds in America.

The Nigerian Y

The magnificent Niger River and its great tributary, the Benue, form a great Y resting on the Bight of Benin. This Y divides the country into three parts, which are very important and very distinctive. In the north is the land of the Moslems and the Arabs. There are two main groups of people, the Fulani who say they are white, and the Negro

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tribes that speak Hausa. The chief city is mud-walled Kano on the edge of the Sahara Desert, and the capital is Kaduna. This region produces peanuts, tin, and hides.

The west is the country of the Yoruba, who get their wealth from cocoa. Its chief city is Ibadan, which has a fine University College. There are more than a half-million people in Ibadan, and that makes it the largest Negro city in the world.

The Ibo are the largest tribe in the east. They depend on the export of palm nuts and palm oil. The capital of the eastern region is Enugu.

Finally, in the south-west is the big city of Lagos, which is one of Africa's best seaports, and the capital of the free federation which has just been formed.

Benin and Ife Bronzes

Two little towns in western Nigeria became famous for their native art. One of them was Benin, where they cast bronze and carved ivory. The figures were mostly of animals, snakes, lions, lizards, and fishes, But there were masks, and plaques, and small statues also.

The other town was Ife, which became known for its bronze heads. They showed extraordinary artistic skill. It is a pity that such bronzes are no longer being made in Nigeria, but who is to buy them? They used to be made for the powerful chiefs. The skilled bronze workers are growing cocoa now.

The Federation of Nigeria

This huge country with about thirty-five million people used to be the largest non-governing part of the British Commonwealth. But it became independent on October 1, 1960. The capital of the federation is Lagos.

Francisca Odiaka was born on the Niger River. She is one of the Ibo, the most important group in the eastern region.

I COME FROM EASTERN NIGERIA

Olutunde Botu is from the western region. He is a Yoruba and he was born near Ibadan. The flag of his region has a mosquito on it. The people there are grateful to the mosquito for keeping so many of the whites out of their country.

I COME FROM EASTERN NIGERIA

BY FRANCISCA ODIAKA

I was born on the Niger

My name is Francisca Odiaka and I was born fifteen years ago in Asaba on the right, or western bank of the Niger River, right opposite the important city of Onitscha. Asaba is sixty-two miles west of Enugu, the capital of the Eastern Region of Nigeria.

The Niger is three and a half miles wide at Asaba, and there are three ways of crossing the stream between Asaba and Onitscha: motorboats, sailboats, and dugouts.

Asaba is a big town with about sixteen thousand people in it, a commercial town with many traders. The Catholic White Fathers run a small secondary school and the nuns have a big convent and a maternity home.

My Father married three times

My father's name was David Odiaka and he was an employee of the public works department of the Eastern Region until he died. I was seven and a half years old then. He married three times and so I have half brothers and sisters as well as full brothers and sisters, ten of them altogether. Some of them are married and I have thirteen nephews and nieces. My own mother's name is Angelina Odiaka.

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I go to a Convent School

I first went to school when I was seven years old. It was a convent school for about seven hundred girls and I was there for five years. When my father died, I came to Enugu to stay at my sister Patricia's home and to attend the Holy Rosary Convent School. The nuns supervise the school, but all the teachers are African women. I am now in the form called standard six.

My sister Patricia, with whom I live, has a small concrete house with two rooms and a corrugated iron roof. The kitchen is separated from the house. We have a few chairs in the house, but we eat on the floor and sleep on the floor, as most Africans do.

Every morning I get up at six and after my prayers the first thing I do is wash the dishes we dirtied the day before. Then I cook breakfast. My sister is married and has two children. We eat at about seven-fifteen. Usually we have yams, which we boil or fry. Sometimes we have rice, or bread, or beans, or fish.

It takes me about ten minutes to walk to school, and school begins with an assembly period at seven-forty-five. There are fifteen hundred children in our convent school and so we meet in three separate assemblies: the infant department, the middle department, and the senior department. We always have prayers during the assembly period and then the different classes call the roll for the attendance.

We have seven periods from eight to one, but at ten-ten I have a chance to eat an orange and some groundnuts. At noon we have midday prayers, and at one we clean up our classrooms and close the school for the day with short prayers.

I study arithmetic, geography, history, singing, drawing, sewing, and English. Instead of English the lower classes study Ibo, the language of my people. I like to study religion best of all and next to that English.

I COME FROM EASTERN NIGERIA

Afternoons and Evenings

I go home for lunch, but this time my sister Patricia gets the meal. We often eat pounded yam with soup. Sometimes we have *gari*, or some other form of cassava. Cassava is called by some Africans *manioc*, and is it the root from which tapioca comes. To make *gari* we wash and grate and boil the cassava root. Then we put it in a sack to press out the water, and leave it for four or five days. Then we sift it to get rid of the fibre. Finally we fry it and eat it with meat or beans or soup. There is another dish we make from cassava, called *eba*.

After lunch I usually sleep for a half hour. On some days I have choir practice after lunch at school. Often I play netball, for I am in the school team. I skip, and run, and jump with the other girls.

Sometimes I wear native clothes, sometimes western clothes. At school I wear a uniform, which is a white dress trimmed with blue. There is a school emblem on the left side of the blouse.

I play an *udo*, which is a small instrument made of clay. It looks like a pot, but the top has a hole at one side. When I beat it with my hands it makes a noise like a drum. On holidays and festivals like Easter I often play with other musicians who use different kinds of drums and beat a big musical instrument like a xylophone, which is made of small hollow logs and lies on the ground.

About six or six-thirty we have supper. Either my sister or I cook it and the meal is simpler than the midday meal. We eat plantains or rice, and sometimes have bread and tea. Then in the evening I do my homework and go to bed about ten.

The rest of the Year

I never go to the cinema in the town, but we sometimes have short educational films at the school. During the

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Christmas holiday many of the pupils go home. I always go back to Asaba to visit my mother.

I have never seen any wild animals except snakes and scorpions. But once traveller ants got into our house.

On my birthday I invite my friends to my house and cook a special meal for them. I also give them presents. On my feast day, which is the day of the saint after whom I am named, I go to a 6 o'clock mass in the morning. On this day my friends bring me presents, some to the school and some to my home.

I should like to be a teacher, but my family has no money, and when I finish primary school this year I shall probably not continue. Then I may go to a sewing class to learn how to sew or I may get a job.

The Ibo

I belong to the most important African tribe in the east, the Ibo, and so I speak Ibo as well as English. There are about four million Ibo in Nigeria. You can tell what tribe a person belongs to in Nigeria by the markings on his face. Small boys and girls have designs cut in their faces and bodies with a small, sharp knife, and then the wounds are kept open for a time, or a black dye called *oli* is rubbed in, so that the marks remain throughout their lives. Often the designs are very elaborate. Now that many people are Christians, this is not done so often as it used to be. I have no knife scars of this sort, but I do have two small dark circles above my cheekbones which are permanent. They were made when I was a baby by burning my cheeks with the juice of the cashew-nut shell.

I COME FROM THE WESTERN REGION

BY OLUTUNDE BOTU

I am a Yoruba

My name is Olutunde Botu and I was born at Ijebu-Ode in the Western Region of Nigeria, near the capital Ibadan. I belong to the Ijebu, a clan in the great tribe of Yoruba. I am fifteen years old.

My father is Francis O. Botu. He is a trader who sells motor parts in Ibadan. He has a store there. My mother is Hannah O. Botu. I have eight brothers and sisters. The oldest is my sister Furlayo, who is a nurse. Next is my brother Adeboye, who is a government clerk. The rest are all at school, four in Ibadan and two in other places.

We move to Ibadan

Our house at Ijebu-Ode was a big brick and cement house with six rooms on the ground floor and six rooms on the second floor. It was right in the centre of the town. Many of the people were traders like my father, but the people in the country there were mostly farmers growing cocoa, from which much of the wealth of western Nigeria comes. I was a very small boy when I lived at Ijebu-Ode. I used to run and jump and play marbles.

I was three when my father moved to Ibadan, where we had another big house, this time with sixteen rooms. Ibadan is a very busy city. I lived there until I was twelve, but during my holidays I used to go back to Ijebu-Ode.

When I was five I began to go to St. Joseph's School in

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Ibadan, to which two of my brothers now go. This school was run by the Church Missionary Society, the missionary organization of the Church of England, to which my family belonged. The school is right in the heart of Ibadan and has about 250 pupils, both boys and girls. When I was there I became a second-class scout.

I go to School in Lagos

When I finished my studies at St. Joseph's, I tried to get into the Ibadan Grammar School, but the school was so crowded that they would not admit me. So I decided to go to the Methodist Boys' High School at Lagos, and that is where I am now. My father pays fifteen guineas tuition and I have to buy my books as well.

I came to Lagos three years ago and went at once to live with my brother Adeboye, who works for the land survey department. He has a rented room near Government House, where the British governor general of Nigeria used to live.

Lagos is a very crowded city with three hundred thousand people. Two hundred thousand of them live on an island of two square miles. There are thousands of wretched little houses built of scraps of wood or iron. The streets are always full of people and everywhere there are children playing.

School and Housekeeping

Every day I get up at five and after dressing and washing I prepare the breakfast for my brother and myself. We have running water in our house. We usually eat *eke*, which is a kind of corn-meal mush made from maize. We mix the corn meal with water and then we boil it and eat it with soup. We also have cocoa and bread and sometimes butter. After breakfast I usually do some housework. My brother's job begins at eight and we both leave the house at seven-forty-five. It is about three quarters of a mile to my school, which is right on the Marina. This is the road along the

I COME FROM THE WESTERN REGION

water front of the lagoon, which is the harbour of Lagos. Ships from all over the world come here.

I get to school early and go through my notes. School begins at eight-thirty and first of all we have a service of worship, which consists of hymns, prayers, and Bible readings. We have four classes in the morning and at ten past ten a break of ten minutes. I usually play in the school compound, but I do not have anything to eat. We have lunch at home from eleven-forty-five to twelve. On Monday we have beans and *gari*, which is a starchy food. On Tuesday we have plain rice and water. On Wednesday we have yams and water. On Thursday we have *eba*, which is another form of *gari*. On Friday we have *dodo*, which is made from plantains. Sometimes we fry the plantains, sometimes we boil them in oil.

We do not have school on Saturday or Sunday.

I am in form two. I study mathematics, science (physics and chemistry), history, geography, art, English, Latin, and my own language, Yoruba. I like science, English, mathematics, and history best. I belong to the Junior Literary and Debating Society. I like debating and reading English literature.

Every two weeks I go to the cinema. We have a dramatic society at the school but the plays the boys give are not for the public. Only the older boys take part.

We wear a white uniform with the school emblem on the left breast pocket. The Methodist Boys' School was founded in 1878 and is over eighty years old. Three hundred and two boys go there.

When I grow up I want to be a doctor, and there is a good medical school at Ibadan. But I shall probably go to England or America also to study.

Saturday and Sunday

On Saturday I sometimes go fishing with other boys in a

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small boat. We stand up and paddle. On Saturday also I go shopping for food and other household supplies. And over the week end I go to the race course whenever I can to play with the boys.

Though I go to the Methodist school I am a member of the Church of England, and on Sunday I go to Christ Church Cathedral. There is a separate service for children from nine to eleven at the same time that the adults have their service. When I was at St. Joseph's School in Ibadan I used to sing in the choir. I used to play a wooden drum there also, but I do not play any instrument now.

Holidays

We have our three long holidays in August, December, and April. During these holidays I go back to see my family in Ibadan. I help my father in his store and also spend some time studying. The most important holiday in the year is Bank Holiday, when I sometimes go on picnics. There is a village near Lagos called Agege, which is a nice place to visit. Sometimes I go to the shore. On my birthday I invite my friends to come and dine with me and usually they bring me presents.

13. THE CAMEROONS

LAND OF THE SHRIMPS

How the Cameroons got their name

TWENTY years before Columbus made his famous voyage to America, in 1472, the Portuguese navigator, Fernão do Po, sailed along these shores. His name is now attached to the Spanish island of Fernando Po, which lies just opposite the mainland here. Later, the Portuguese traders caught some fine shrimps at the mouth of the mainland rivers, and so they called the country 'Shrimp Land'. The Portuguese word for 'shrimp' is *camarão*, and from that word comes our English word 'Cameroons', and the French word 'Cameroun'.

The Germans take over

During the period when the European nations were colonizing Africa, some of the native chiefs asked for British protection. Britain, however, was slow in deciding that she really wanted this land. Finally, she decided to sign treaties with the chiefs. These chiefs had strange names. One of them was called Eyo Honesty VII, another was King Duke Ephraim IX. The latter once called on a British official wearing a top hat. But he had nothing else on.

When the British arrived in Douala on the coast to sign the treaties, they found they were five days too late. The Germans had arrived first.

So the Cameroons remained German until the end of

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World War I. The defeated Germans were then forced to hand over the country to the League of Nations, which divided it into two mandates. The smaller one was turned over to Britain, the larger one to France. After World War II this arrangement was continued under the name of United Nations Trust Territories.

The Throne of Thunder

The highest peak in West Africa is Mount Cameroon. It is a live volcano, 13,760 feet high. To call this huge mountain, the base of which alone covers seven hundred square miles of the British Cameroons, the 'Shrimp' seems a bit ridiculous. Even to call it Great Cameroon, the 'Big Shrimp', doesn't help much. The natives had a more appropriate name for it. They called it Mungomalobeh, which means the 'Throne of Thunder'.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century Mungomalobeh had never been climbed. The people around it thought that it could not be climbed. Perhaps they were afraid of it, for the icy peaks of the high mountains were often thought to be, like Mt. Olympus in Greece, the dwelling place of the dreaded gods.

In 1861 Sir Richard Francis Burton was sent as a British consul to Fernando Po. Burton was a restless soul, already a famous explorer. He spoke many languages, including Arabic, and in 1853, in the disguise of a Moslem, he had made a memorable journey to the shrines of Mecca and Medina in the Arabian Peninsula. With John Speke he had discovered Lake Tanganyika in 1858. In 1865 he had explored the highlands of Brazil.

When Burton arrived in Fernando Po it was certain he would want to climb Mt. Cameroon. He organized a little party of four whites and twenty native carriers. They started on December 19, 1861, and spent Christmas Day high up on the mountainside, eating beef and a plum pudding which

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they had brought with them. On December 27 Burton went ahead of the others and reached the summit alone. When his companions arrived they all celebrated the feat by hoisting the Union Jack, drinking a bottle of champagne, and leaving in a cairn they constructed, a record cut in lead of that first ascent.

The two Cameroons

The British Cameroons consisted until recently of two little slivers of land between the French Cameroun and Nigeria. One of them was a narrow wedge that ran from the Atlantic for four hundred miles into the interior. The capital was Victoria and the principal seaports were Tiko and Bota. The country was sometimes said to be the wettest place on earth with an average rainfall of about 390 inches. Up in the north was another sliver of land, entirely separated from the southern portion, about two hundred miles long.

The southern part became a region in the new Federation of Nigeria in 1960, and the northern part became another region in 1961. The British Cameroons no longer exist.

The French Cameroun is very much larger. Its capital is Yaounde and its principal port is Douala. On January 1, 1960, the country voted to become an independent member of the French Community. It was about to place upon its new flag an image of the shrimp, for which the country is named. But its advisers said it would be laughed at by the English-speaking people, who would think it funny to have a little shrimp used as the symbol of a new African nation.

Peter Foubi and Suzanne Ngo-Itibi are both living in Douala at the moment, but both of them will probably go home to their own villages soon, the first to the former British Cameroons, the second to the Republic of the Cameroun. They give us vivid pictures of what life is like in the tiny towns of the interior.

I AM FROM THE FORMER BRITISH CAMEROONS

BY PETER FOUBI

Babanki is my Village

You cannot drive to the village I come from. There is no road. A trail leads to another village where there is a road, but you have to go there on foot or on a bicycle. There are only about ten bicycles in my village and I have never had one. The village is called Babanki and it is in the province of Bamenda in the former British Cameroons. It is a small place, only about 120 houses. Two mountains rise above the village, but on the whole it is a flat country of many farms. It is not in the forest.

The people grow Irish potatoes, coffee, coco-yams, cassava, different kinds of vegetables, bananas, pineapples, and palm-nut oil. The palm trees are very precious to us. We make palm wine from the sap in the trunk. We get food from the tender heart of the tree near the top and from the oil that we press out of the nuts. We get shelter from the palm-tree branches which we put on our walls and roofs.

We boys soon learn how to climb to the top of the trees to get the big clusters of nuts, from which we press the oil we use in cooking or sell in the market. At the bottom of the tree we tie a very strong vine around the tree and around our waists. Then we begin to hitch our way up the trunk, clinging to the tree with our bare feet and jerking the vine up and up until we reach the top. We hold a bush knife between our teeth. At the top we slash off the big bunch of nuts and let it fall to the ground. The nuts are then put into a large kettle and boiled in water. Then they are pressed

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out, usually by the bare feet of the women, until the oil is separated from the pulp that surrounds the hard kernel. After that it is cooked some more and the thick orange oil is separated from the water. The hard nuts are cracked also for the kernel inside has more oil in it.

My people have cows, sheep, goats, and pigs. We get milk to drink from the cows and we keep the other animals for meat. There are no big wild animals near our village and no poisonous snakes. When the men go hunting they have to travel for some distance. They try to get porcupines, rabbits, wild pigs, and bush cows. The boys go fishing in the small streams, but there are no big rivers.

The people in the village make small furniture for themselves, and there are Jewish traders who come from Lagos in Nigeria and from the former French Cameroun. We have two schools, a Catholic school and a Protestant school, and two churches, a Catholic church and a Baptist church. I went to the Catholic church. Most of the people are Catholics, but there are some Protestants and many heathen. We have many medicine men, or *féticheurs*, also. They are almost everywhere in Africa.

Our Houses

Our houses are square with mud or palm-leaf walls and bamboo roofs covered with grass or palm leaves. The Catholic church, however, is made of stone.

The floors of the houses are of earth and usually there are several rooms. My house had a living room and three sleeping rooms. The kitchen was a separate little building outside the main house. Our beds were made of bamboo covered with grass. We used blankets at night for my country is a cold country. The temperature in the dry season is between fourteen and fifteen degrees Centigrade (fifty-five to sixty degrees Fahrenheit). This season is from October to June. From July to September comes the rainy season and then it is warm.

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Markets and Fun

We have a regular market in the village, but the calendar we use is a native calendar and the market does not always come on the same day of the week. The people come from all the villages round about. They sell chickens, and eggs, and meat, and oranges, and mangoes, and pears, and different vegetables. The other villages have fairs, too, and our people go to them. It is great fun, and talking is more important than selling and buying.

On special nights the people dance and sing, but this is only for the adults. We boys and girls just watch. For the dancing they beat on drums, play a kind of xylophone, called a *jojo*, and beat little things together with their hands to make a noise.

When I was a small boy I played with other boys. We kicked a tennis ball around, and played hide-and-seek in the village. Then we went swimming in the streams.

Palavers

We learned many things by listening to the stories the older men told us. We learned how to argue about everything just for the fun of it. The men started a palaver by telling stories like this one. Three men were going to the market together. One of them wanted to sell a dog, the second to sell some meat, the third to sell some manioc. At noon one of them said, 'Let us eat.' So they stopped, and the second man brought out his meat and gave the dog a bone to chew. After they had eaten they went on their way and forgot all about the dog, who went on gnawing his bone. After a while they noticed that the dog was not with them, so they went back to find him. Suddenly, all three of them at the same time saw two fine elephant tusks lying on the ground. But there were only two tusks and there were three men. Each of them claimed the tusks.

This was the subject of the debate. Which of the three

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should get the tusks? One of the men said, 'We found them because we all went back to find my dog.' The second one said, 'Yes, but the dog stayed behind to eat the bone I gave him.' The third one said, 'I was the one who suggested that we stop to eat just there.' So the palaver began and lasted a long time. In the end it was decided that the men who had the dog and the meat should have the two tusks. The man who only carried the vegetables did not have so good a claim. Our debates were very exciting sometimes.

The Chief's Birthday

My family belongs to the Babanki race, which is not a very big race in the British Cameroons. Every one of our villages has a chief, who is elected for life by the people. But if he is not a good chief, it is very easy to get rid of him.

The chief's birthday in my village takes place the day after Christmas. In the evening we all go to dance before his house. There is a lot of native music and speeches. Then the chief hands out presents: wine, fowls, and other food, clothing, and things like that.

Names in my Family

My father's name is John Zowen. We do not have family names. The girls always take the name of their mother. But the boys do not take either the father's or the mother's name. So my name is Peter Foubi, which has nothing to do with my father's name. But my mother is Elizabeth Bie, and my small sister, who is only five, is Thersea Bie.

I am the oldest of the children, and after me comes Jerome Tobah, who is ten. He is in the Catholic school.

My father is in the public works department, which takes care of the roads in other villages, though we have none in ours. He was born in my village and is now about thirty-six years old. Before he began work for the government he was a farmer.

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When I was seven my father got ill and was in the hospital for a year and a half. So I went with my mother to stay with my uncle in the same village and it was there that my brother Jerome was born. My uncle had some sons who were a little older than I. I used to play with them.

Tiko on the Coast

I was baptized in the Catholic church when I was nine and started to go to St. Patrick's School in Babanki. I was there for three years. My grandfather was paying for my education then, but when he felt he could no longer do this I was sent to live with another uncle at Tiko, which is right on the coast near Kumba. My uncle was working for one of the big plantations there, and we lived in a company house of corrugated iron. This company was called Elder and Fyfes, Limited. Tiko is in the Cameroon Province. Most of the people there worked for the big banana companies, but they also fished a great deal. I went to the company school and studied geography, English, writing, arithmetic, history, hygiene, and natural science. But I did not like it at Tiko. We had too many mosquitoes and it was too hot. I had no mosquito net and it was hard to sleep at night.

Douala

So when my cousin Joseph Fonde, who was living at Douala, invited me to stay with him I was very glad to go. My cousin thought I could study mechanics, but I have never had a chance to do this.

I have been at Douala for almost two years now. At first I worked for one of the Europeans as a houseboy. It was the only work I could get. But he was very unkind and I only stayed with him for three months. Then I started to work unloading boxes of fish from the ships. The work was night work and it began at two in the morning. One night I was arrested by the police, for there was a law that children under

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eighteen could not work at night. The police took me to a home for children, most of whom are orphans, run by a German lady, who is called Madame Balea. There are six of us boys there. We wash our own dishes, make our own beds, sweep our rooms, and wash our clothes. The home is supported by the French government.

We boys play a good deal together, take long walks in the city, and push around in a little boat called a *pédalo*. It works like a bicycle and we make it go with our feet.

Work, Play and Study,

I get up at six, but I eat no breakfast in the morning. I do some chores, take a bath, and then I play. We have lunch at twelve, usually things like rice, cocoa-yams, macaroni, and meat or fish alternately. The fish may be fresh or dried. We drink water. On Monday we have fruit, but we never have sweet desserts. I like rice and beans, or rice and meat, but best of all I like vegetables.

After lunch I have a two-hour nap and then I play again until six when we have our supper, the same kind of meal as our lunch. In the evening a teacher comes to teach us arithmetic, reading, and writing. We have no radio, but sometimes I read. We all sleep in one room, but in separate beds. At nine thirty we must go to bed.

The Canadian Christian Brothers

Near our home the Canadian Christian Brothers have a school to teach apprentices carpentering, mechanics, electricity, and car repairing. But you have to be a graduate of a French school to be admitted there. I cannot go to this school, but the brothers are very kind to us, and sometimes take us to the cinema. I go to chapel there, and attend mass at seven or eight on Sunday morning.

I speak Babanki, English, and a little French. But there is no alphabet for Babanki, so I cannot read or write it.

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I wish I could go to a regular school and I still want to be a mechanic. It is possible that in another few months I may go back to my village and return to school there. But I really do not know what the future may be for me.

I AM FROM THE FORMER FRENCH CAMEROUN

BY SUZANNE NGO-ITIBI

My village is Epako

Not far from Babimi in the new Republic of the Cameroun is the little village of Epako with about thirty houses in it. That is where I was born. The people there are all farmers, and they grow peanuts, cacao, corn, cassava, sweet potatoes, and palm nuts for oil. The people also make some pottery, some simple furniture, and some tools, but only for their own use. It is a flat country with many little streams and some big forests. The forests are full of porcupines, wild boars, and buffaloes. Most of the wild animals we eat, if we can catch them, including the wild rats. The monkeys are everywhere, black ones, grey ones, white ones, red ones. Even the terrible gorilla is there.

Our houses are rectangular with mud walls and bamboo roofs with palm-leaf tiles spread over them. In my house we had four rooms. Outside was a separate kitchen. The stove consisted of three stones on the ground, on which the cooking pot was placed. We slept on mattresses made of grass and placed on the ground. We had sheets and blankets, tables and chairs.

Life in my Village

I used to help my mother when I was small. I went to the

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stream to get the water, and I helped her with the cleaning and cooking. I used to carry my little sister around sitting on my hip. Then when I got bigger I used to work on the farm. I played with the other girls, dancing and clapping our hands in ring games. We played hide-and-seek, and went into the forest to hunt for mangoes, hazelnuts, and other things to eat. In the forest we had to be very careful, for there were dangerous snakes.

It was a very simple life and I loved it. Now, when I am away from my village I sometimes get very homesick. When we were tired we lay down and went to sleep. When we were hungry we ate. When we were thirsty we drank. When we were hot we took a bath. When we were happy we played and danced.

But, of course, there was also a lot of work to do. We had to plant the garden and take care of it. The men had to hunt for meat, and every morning the boys had to go to the forest to visit the traps that had been set there. Meat was almost the most important thing for us in the forest, and whenever there was fresh meat everybody gathered around to get his share of it. With meat and palm wine the village had a feast.

We often heard the tam-tam at night in the forest, sounding from the next village. Plouk-pan-pan! Plouk-pan! Plouk-plouk-pan! The old people could tell what it was saying, for they knew the language of the tam-tam. Perhaps they were saying that someone in a distant village was dead.

We had all kinds of medicines. There were herbs to cure wounds, barks for fever, things to take for snakebite. The people knew lots about plants. The medicines were often kept in antelope horns.

There was a Catholic church in the next village and a Protestant church in still another village. There was a school in the village that had the Catholic church.

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Children's Games

The children have special games that they love to play. They play a game about animals that have a tail. An armful of palm leaves is brought and everyone sits down in a circle. Someone begins by taking a leaf, putting it down in front of him, and saying, 'The cat has a tail.' Then everyone chants, 'That is true, the cat has a tail.' The next one does the same, and says, 'The elephant has a tail.' And everyone chants, 'That is true, the elephant has a tail.' But if within a certain time a player cannot think of an animal that has a tail or names one that has been named before he loses his palm branch. In the end the palm branches are counted and the one who has the most rises and dances in triumph, while the rest beat their hands.

The boys play fetish sometimes. Some branches are tied together as a fetish. One boy says, 'Who touches my fetish is dead.' Then he leaves his fetish on the ground and goes away. When he comes back he looks at his fetish and exclaims, 'Who touched my fetish?' He looks around the circle and asks, 'Was it you?' 'Was it you?' Then they all say, 'Ask your fetish to tell you.' Then the boy begins to shout and make queer noises, he jumps around and rolls on the ground. Suddenly he pounces on the one who really did touch his fetish. But I know how he does it. There is another boy in the circle who winks or makes motions with his fingers to show him who touched his fetish.

My Father is a Farmer

My father's name is Itibi Joseph, and he is a farmer like the others. He has a big farm, but the farm is not all in one plot. He was born in my village and is about forty-five.

My mother is Agnes Wtok. She was born in another village not far away.

My brother, Pierre Boum, is eighteen. He is married and has gone to Yaounde as a cook. Raymond Lognyo is sixteen.

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He lives with Pierre and is going to the *lycée* at Yaounde. Then I have a little sister, Itibi Ann-Marie, who is three.

The Collège Saint Esprit

My first school was the Catholic school near the church. I went there when I was six and stayed for seven years. I studied history, geography, arithmetic, French, and catechism. Then my father sent me to the Collège Saint Esprit in Douala, where I am now. The college is run by the Sisters of the Holy Ghost. I am a boarding pupil and my father has to pay for me. I am studying the same subjects there, but I am also beginning English. The Cameroun used to be German and the old people speak that language, but none of the young people speak it.

I get up in the morning at six and have breakfast at eight, always bread and milk. Then I do some homework. Each boarder cleans one of the classrooms and helps to wash the dishes. The school has a thousand pupils and there are sixty boarders, two or three girls in a bedroom. There are about seven sisters and a number of native teachers.

Classes begin at eight and end at twelve, with a ten-minute recess at nine-fifty, when I eat some bread. We have lunch at twelve-fifteen, when we always have meat or fish. We eat a lot of tomatoes, peanuts, cooking bananas, and manioc, which are prepared by the native women. The fish may be fresh or dried. We have some fruit and some water to drink. After lunch we play and from two-thirty to four-thirty we have supervised study. During this period we may study French, or English, or something else.

At four-thirty I eat some more bread and am free until five, when we often have physical exercise outdoors. We play volley-ball a great deal and about twice a year we play with other schools. Of course, only the best players are in the teams. I have been at the school only a short time and have not yet been chosen. After those games we are free until

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seven when we have dinner with more native dishes. Then again I am free until eight-fifteen when we have prayers in the school chapel. Then we study again until bedtime.

On Thursday afternoon there are organized games at the school, but otherwise we are free. On Saturday morning we have normal classes and in the afternoon we have sewing and drawing. We do modelling, too, and I made some sheep for the Christmas crèche at the cathedral, which is right opposite my school. On Thursday and Saturday we wash our clothes, too.

On Sunday there is a mass at nine. One Sunday in each month we may go visiting in the city. I have a distant relation there who comes to get me and then brings me back again.

I was not able to go home last Christmas because of the distance. But during the next long holiday I will certainly go back. I will work in the fields hoeing and weeding, and I will help my mother in the house.

I am a Bassa, which is a very numerous race found through all the villages near the coast. So I speak French and my native language. Every day when I greet my mother I say in my native language, *Meyega a mama*, which means 'Good morning, Mamma'.

My Future

I like English best of my studies, and I think I should like to be a nun. Of course, I might get married, and marriage festivals are great fun in my country. The man usually pays money to the father of the girl, but the girl does not have to marry him if she does not like him. For two days everybody has a very happy time when there is a wedding. People dance and sing, but they do not play on instruments. Of course, they eat a great deal, too, almost all the time for those two days. And they wish the bride and groom good luck. *Kelek longe!* they say.

14. GABON

THE SCHWEITZER COUNTRY

The Portuguese named it

THE Portuguese, who explored this coast in the latter part of the fifteenth century, found a broad, deep bay just south of what is now Libreville. They thought it was the mouth of a great river and they called it Gabão. *Gabão* in Portuguese means a 'cabin'. That is what it looked like to them when they sailed into it. From this word comes the French word for the country, which is Gabon. We know now that the Gabon is not a river, though several rivers flow into it. On the island of Koniké in the centre of this bay you can still see the remains of a fort the Portuguese built.

Du Chaillu the first, King of the Apingi

The greatest river in the Gabon is the Ogowé. This is the French name for it. The natives had many names. Some of the tribes had two names for it, one name when they were paddling upstream, and another when they were downstream. The Ogowé is one of Africa's greatest rivers, the most important between the Niger and the Congo. For about eight hundred miles it flows roughly along the equator. It is probably the most important equatorial river in the world.

The first of the great modern explorers in this region was Paul Belloni du Chaillu. He was probably born in Paris in 1831, but his father was a French trader in the Gabon and

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that is where Paul was brought up. He made many journeys into the interior in those early years and learned the languages of the coast tribes.

Then he went to the United States and became an American citizen in 1852. The Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science backed him in a plan to explore the Gabon River. So he returned to Africa and spent six years travelling in the unknown back country. He visited many tribes of which the outside world had never heard, including the Pygmies. He discovered the gorilla, and took back to America the first specimens that ever reached that land. He made a large collection of mammals and birds, scores of them quite new to the science of his day.

Du Chaillu has written fascinating books about his travels in the Ogowé region. He called the river the Ogobai. For some time he lived with the Fan who were cannibals. Then he visited the primitive people called the Apingi. They had never seen a white man before and thought he was a spirit. They brought him a bound slave to kill and eat for supper. When he would not accept the gift, they were surprised and asked him, 'Why then do you buy our people? Do you not fatten them in your far country and eat them?' In the end he so won their confidence that the council of chiefs came to him one day and said, 'Spirit, you have come to our country to do us good. You are our king and ruler; stay with us always. We love you, and will do what you wish.'

So Du Chaillu wrote, 'From this day, therefore, I may call myself Du Chaillu the First, King of the Apingi.'

This great explorer proved that the simple people of Africa would respond to kindness with affection.

Conte Pietro Paolo Savorgnan di Brazza

Just as Du Chaillu, the Frenchman, became an American citizen, so this son of an Italian nobleman became a Frenchman, and another of Africa's great explorers. We know him

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by his French name now, Pierre Paul Savorgnan de Brazza. He was born in 1852 in a Roman palace. As a small boy he was afraid of the dark. He cured himself by visiting a graveyard by night. After that he was afraid of nothing. He decided that he would be a sailor, but there was no real Italian navy in those days, so he went to France. Having finished his training he became a French citizen and proposed to the Minister of the Navy a plan for the further exploration of the Ogowé river. And soon he found himself up the stream on a gunboat to Lambaréné.

At Lambaréné the explorers changed to dugouts and pushed farther up the river than any white man had ever gone before. Finally he found the river turning to the southeast. It could not be, therefore, that this river led to the great lakes in the centre of Africa. So he left the narrowing stream and started over the jungle trails with his men to the east. His only guide was the compass he carried. The little party now found another river that ran to the east. But as they were proceeding down this stream, for the first time in their experience they were attacked by the natives. They had never had any trouble of this kind before, and they were amazed. But they had to retreat, and in 1878 they were back on the coast they had left three years before.

It was there that they learned of the American explorer Stanley who had just travelled across Africa from east to west, spreading terror along the way. The natives that had attacked de Brazza thought that he was Stanley. De Brazza returned to France, but from that time on his only thought was to get back to Africa and to win for France the land that Stanley was trying to seize.

We shall learn more of these two men in the next chapters of this book.

Albert Schweitzer, Giant of the Jungle

· Albert Schweitzer was never an explorer like these men

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whose feats of daring and endurance we have been describing. He has lived in the Gabon for many years now, but except for his journeys from Europe to Africa and back again he has never travelled in the Gabon more than five miles away from his hospital. Still, he has done something that most explorers have never even attempted. He has brought the best of our western civilization into the heart of tropical Africa.

Many books have been written about him. Here we can only devote a few lines to his life. At the age of thirty he was already one of Europe's great intellectual leaders. He was a doctor of philosophy, a doctor of theology, and a doctor of music. He had already written a number of very important books. He was a professor in the University of Strasbourg and a preacher in the city. He was an expert in organ construction, the greatest living authority on the life and music of Johann Sebastian Bach, Germany's great composer, and an organist in demand all over western Europe. Then he decided to give all this up. He would enter the medical school, and prepare to go to Africa, as a physician to serve the most forgotten people on the face of the earth, the tribes that lived on the Ogowé River in the Gabon.

In 1913 he established his hospital there, and at the age of eighty-six he still works in the worst climate on the globe, bringing to the natives the message of Christian love and brotherhood. But his message is not in words, it is in deeds.

The Republic of the Gabon

In November, 1960, the Gabon voted to become an independent country, and a member of the French Community. Its capital is Libreville.

Colette Vasner is a charming French girl who has lived all her years in this region that Du Chaillu and de Brazza explored. She tells us many interesting things about the jungle and about Dr. Schweitzer's hospital.

I LIVE AT THE SCHWEITZER HOSPITAL

BY COLETTE ELSE FERNAND VASNER

My Birth was Exciting

I WAS born in M'Beule, a very small place on the N'Gounie River, close to the falls. The N'Gounie flows north into the Ogowé River, which is a great river about eight hundred miles long that runs parallel to the Congo River and empties into the Atlantic Ocean at Port Gentil.

My father's name is Fernand Albert Vasner and he is a lumberman. My mother's name is Else Emilia Vasner. I have a brother, Daniel Raoul, who is now seven years old, and a small sister, Eveline, who is three.

My mother tells me it was a very exciting night when I was born. She had planned to go to the Albert Schweitzer Hospital on the tenth of March, which was ten days before I was expected. My father was then in charge of a lumber camp of 150 African workmen who were cutting trees in the jungle. He was called the *chef d'exploitation*. We were living at that time in a straw hut, while a bigger and more comfortable house was being built for us. On the morning of the tenth my mother was to be carried through the jungle by bearers for two hours, then she was to travel for an hour in a dugout, which we call a *pirogue*, after which she was to take a ten-hour ride in a motorboat, which we call a *pinasse*, down the N'Gounie River and the Ogowé to Dr. Schweitzer's hospital at Lambaréné. All day on the ninth my mother was packing and getting ready to leave. Perhaps she got too

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tired, but whatever the reason I was born in the straw hut early in the morning of the tenth. There was no one to help but my father.

To make matters worse, just before I was born, an army of traveller ants appeared and tried to get into the house. These are terrible insects, which eat up everything in sight, all green things and small animals like hens. They have even been known to kill human beings. To keep them from getting in, my father had to put hot ashes all around the house, and when the heavy dews made the ashes wet, he had to spread fresh ashes around.

At six the next morning a messenger started off to get the nearest doctor, but he did not arrive until one in the morning. By that time Papa had got the house all cleaned up, and when the doctor came he found that my mother was all right. He stayed for a day and when he left he carried off the papers to register my birth. But a few days after he got home he had to leave for Europe, and then he was sent to Indo-China. During this time he forgot all about registering me, and when later my mother went to get some papers for me she found that my name and the date of my birth were not in the books at all.

Four days after my birth a dog was born at our house, who was named after the place where we lived, M'Boule. He became my great friend and guardian.

My Early Life

Four months later the big house was ready. It was very pretty, they say, built of straw, like the little one, and with floors of beaten earth, but with five big rooms. The kitchen and a small house for showers were outside the main house. The house was on a hill, and a small stream separated it from the houses of the African workmen. They felled a tree across the stream and that was our bridge.

For seven months after I was born I did not see another

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white child. When I was a year old my mother took me to Lambaréné on a brief visit, for that was the nearest place to buy provisions.

When I was a year and a half old Papa moved to the shore of the Atlantic near Libreville. His job was to get the big logs that had come floating down the river tied together in rafts for loading on the vessels that carried them to Europe. I have seen since then the house where we lived at that time. I stayed there until I was three and a half.

Mamma was then expecting another baby and so I went with her to the Schweitzer Hospital, where my brother, Daniel Raoul, was born. Dr. Schweitzer baptized Daniel and me together a few days after he came. I remained at Lambaréné for three months, after which we returned to Libreville.

In 1948 Papa had nine months' leave in Europe and we spent them in France and Switzerland. I had a lovely doll that could walk and talk and I wanted very much to take it to Europe with me. The boat stopped at different ports and at Lagos in Nigeria I forgot it and left it behind. This is what I remember best about my trip to Europe. It was a great tragedy.

In the Middle Congo

We returned to Africa by plane and went first of all to Brazzaville, which was the capital of French Equatorial Africa at that time. It was on the Congo River just across from Léopoldville, the capital of what was then the Belgian Congo. But we did not stay there long, for my father was sent into the jungle again to another lumber camp, this time to a place called Ouessou. This is in what was then the Middle Congo, and it took fifteen days of sailing up the Congo River and another stream to get there. We stayed at this camp for eight months, while my father's men cut down the huge *okoume* trees, from which they make cigar boxes, plywood, and veneers. The *okoume* grows about twice

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as high as the average big tree in the jungle, and the logs from it are tremendous in size. Other valuable trees grow there, too, like mahogany and ebony, but some of these woods are so heavy that they would not float down the rivers and so they were not cut.

After Ouessou we went back to Brazzaville where we remained for five months. Papa's work at that time was in the port on the Congo River.

Another Lumber Camp

Then up the Congo we went again to another lumber camp at Matoko. It took us eight days by steamer to get there. We had a nice garden at Matoko with many fruit trees. My mother and I took care of it. There was another white family there when we arrived and until they moved away we had to sleep on canvas cots in another little straw hut. I remember there were many rats. Often on Sunday I used to go duck hunting with Papa, sometimes on foot and sometimes through the swamps in a dugout. I used to make little rafts of different kinds of wood, like the big rafts of logs Papa made. Then I would send them floating down the river. I was at Matoko for three years and before I left I could speak Lingala, which is the language of the natives in that part of Africa.

My mother wanted to teach me to swim, but the rivers are very dirty and there are dangerous fish in them. One of the fish, called a *binga*, can bite a leg right off. So my mother filled a big *pirogue* with water and put my brother Daniel and me in it. But the moment her back was turned we were both in the river hanging on to the sides of the *pirogue*. I never did learn how to swim.

When I was seven we came to Brazzaville again, for my mother was expecting another baby. She could not find anyone to take care of Daniel and me, so once more we went to Dr. Schweitzer's hospital. We lived there in the house

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called 'Sans Souci', which is usually for white visitors who are not sick. Then after my little sister Eveline was born we returned to Brazzaville by air and then took the boat again for the eight-day trip back to my father's lumber camp at Matoko. We arrived there on the fourteenth of July, which is the great national French holiday, Bastille Day. The workmen were having a wonderful time, dancing with masks and singing songs. They had many games also and a dugout race across the Congo River and back.

Elephants in the Plantation

One night, not long after, the workmen came running up to our house and woke up the family. 'There are elephants in the plantation,' they shouted. This, of course, was very bad, for elephants can ruin a plantation in a single night. They tear up the trees, eat all the fruit, and trample everything into the ground. So my father gave the workmen a gun to shoot them with. Very soon I heard 'Boom! Boom!' and in a little while the natives came back and said that they had killed two elephants and the rest had fled. As it was bright moonlight Mamma took me out to see what had happened. There were the two elephants lying dead on the ground. One was a male elephant and one was a female. The male had only one tusk. The next day nothing but bones were left. The Africans like elephant meat.

That autumn my mother caught sleeping sickness from the bite of a tsetse fly, and was ill for three years. Our last Christmas in Matoko was that year. We had a wonderful Christmas tree, a big palm tree filled with candles. The people of the nearby village came and we had ice cream and sweets. The Catholics and Protestants all sang the Christmas hymns together, and there were gifts for everyone.

Sleeping Sickness

. The next year—I was eight then—I went to Brazzaville

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with Mamma so that she could get some treatment at the Pasteur Institute. The treatment lasted for three months. We lived at a place called M'Pila. The owner of the house had five buffaloes. One day when I was out pushing Eveline in her baby carriage I saw the five buffaloes coming down the street toward me. I was so frightened that I seized the baby and ran home, leaving the carriage in the road.

My mother was still ill after the treatment was over, and once more the whole family except my father went to the Schweitzer Hospital. And here we have stayed ever since, now for two and a half years. When my mother began to get better she worked in the hospital, and for a while I helped her give injections.

I have never been to School

I have never been to any school. When I was five Mamma began to teach me to read and write. Then she taught me geography and the history of France. Afterwards I began to study arithmetic and penmanship. Now there is a Pastor Vigne at the hospital who is teaching Daniel and me for two hours every day from eight-thirty to ten-thirty in the morning. In the afternoon we do the homework he has given us. I am now studying reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and the history of France.

My Life at the Schweitzer Hospital

I get up at six in the morning and then I begin to read. At night I go to bed at eight. We live in the cottage I have already mentioned and we eat in the big dining room where Dr. Schweitzer, the staff, and the white patients eat, though at a separate table. We have plenty of good food, sometimes meat and eggs and fish, many vegetables and salads from the garden, and many kinds of fruit from the trees that Dr. Schweitzer planted so many years ago. In the evening after supper we always have a little service at the tables. We

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sing a hymn, one night in French and the next night in German, then Dr. Schweitzer reads a verse from the Bible and repeats the Lord's Prayer. I love the singing.

There are about 750 people at the hospital, all but a few of them Africans. I play with two African girls. I speak French and Swiss German, and I understand a good deal of German. My family, of course, is French. My father is a Catholic, but the rest of us are Protestants. All of us children were christened by Dr. Schweitzer.

When my last birthday came I had eleven candles on my cake at the breakfast table and there were flowers and presents. Dr. Schweitzer made a speech about me and I was very proud, for Dr. Schweitzer is a very great man, known all over the world. A few years ago he received the Nobel Peace Prize.

You can see my life is not like the life of most girls. It is the life of a girl in a white family living in the jungle of Africa. I have never been to the cinema, for instance. But still I think my life is very interesting and sometimes very exciting.

15. THE CONGO REPUBLIC

THE FORMER MIDDLE CONGO

French Equatorial Africa

THIS great region, which has recently split up into four separate states, used to be the most central country in Africa. If you drew a straight line between the most westerly and the most easterly capes in Africa, it would bisect another straight line between the most northerly and the most southerly capes in Africa. The country extended in rising steps from the swamps of the Atlantic coast up to Lake Tchad and the sands of the Sahara.

It was composed of four overseas territories of France: Gabon, which we have already visited, Tchad in the north, Ubangi-Shari in the centre, and the Middle Congo in the south. We are about to visit the Middle Congo, which became a free member of the French Community on November 28, 1958. It took the name of the République du Congo, which was exactly the same name that the former Belgian Congo took after that country became independent. Ubangi-Shari also became independent under the name of the Central African Republic, and the Tchad is now the Republic of Tchad. The four old territories have now formed the Union of Central African Republics. This is little more than a customs union, however. The capital of the Congo Republic is Brazzaville.

THE FORMER MIDDLE CONGO

The Two Rivals

We left de Brazza in France burning with impatience to get back to Africa. Stanley was already there making his way up the Congo River. For 250 miles the river is full of rapids and Stanley was travelling overland with his men, carrying with him the parts of a steamboat which were to be assembled above the falls. Finally, de Brazza was able to follow.

De Brazza resolved to ascend the Ogowé and then march across country to reach the upper Congo from the west. After he had left the Ogowé valley he heard the natives speak for the first time of the great river he was seeking. He had no more trouble with hostile tribes. His reputation for kindness and justice had gone before him. In the name of France he made a treaty with the great native king Makoko. Makoko gave de Brazza a little box of earth for him to take back to the Great Chief of the Whites. It was a sign that the natives accepted the rule of the French. Similar treaties of peace were signed with other tribes. The natives literally buried the hatchet in the earth to show that war, too, had been buried.

The explorers reached the Congo and paddled for five days down the stream, a distance of four hundred miles, to the great basin above the first of the rapids, where Brazzaville now stands. There, in the presence of the native chiefs, de Brazza took possession of the whole right bank of the mighty river. Then he proceeded to the coast.

Meanwhile Stanley had gone upstream on the other bank. He had intended to claim the whole Congo region for the King of the Belgians. But de Brazza had reached the right bank first.

De Brazza's return to France was a triumphant one. Everyone wanted to see him, to talk to him, to photograph him. His work made possible the organization of the French Congo and its gradual extension from the great river to the Cameroons and from the sea to the desert.

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The Primeval Forest

This forest is full of strange animals like the gorillas, of strange people like the Pygmies, of strange trees like the *kapok* and the *okoume*, which are not known in our western world. It is a land of strange customs and languages, superstitions and witchcraft. Simon Massamouna will tell us how he and his people live in the native quarters of Brazzaville, called Poto-Poto.

I LIVE IN BRAZZAVILLE

BY SIMON MASSAMOUNA

Poto-Poto Languages

I WAS born in Poto-Poto, which is a large native town at one end of the long main street of Brazzaville, the capital of the Congo Republic. Some of the Africans living there are called Bangala, and their language, Lingala, is the language of commerce and trade. It is a very simple language, but many of the women and children do not understand it. The name of my town, Poto-Poto, is the Lingala word for 'mud-mud'. The principal road through Poto-Poto is now a good tarmac road, but in the rainy season the rest of the town has streets which are just mud and mud.

The other language most spoken in Poto-Poto is Kicongo, and there is a kind of *lingua franca*, spoken by many people, which is called Monokotuba. This is a mixture of French, English, Spanish, Lingala, and Kicongo. I speak four languages: French, Lingala, Kicongo, and Monokotuba.

The Family

My father's name is Simon Bizamba, and he is a mason by trade, working for one of the big building companies. He works in concrete, brick, and stone. He has only one wife, though many of the men have more than one. My mother's name is Pauline Massaka. She sells firewood, buying half a truckload at a time, piling it beside the house, and selling it to the neighbours in small quantities. The money she earns is her own, and she spends it to buy clothes for herself or other things she may want for herself and the children.

I have two brothers and three sisters. The oldest brother is eighteen. He is Maurice Mazandou and he lives with my mother's younger brother. He is not married and works in the customs office. He is learning to type and wants to get a job in a bank. That is what most African boys want to do. He gives the money he earns to my mother and does not pay my uncle for his room and board. It is my uncle's duty to take care of him, for among my people the head of the family is the mother's brother and not the father. My uncle is really responsible for me.

The next in my family is a girl of sixteen, Rebecca Nzoumba. She has just been married to a policeman of twenty-three, and has gone to live with him at Pointe Noire, which is the seaport at the end of the railway from Brazzaville through Dolisie to the coast. Before they got married the policeman had to give a dowry to the family. My mother's brother, as the head of the family, received five thousand francs and my father got ten thousand francs. The policeman also gave my mother two dresses and a *kitambala*, or coloured scarf for her hair. My father received a waterproof coat, some wine, and a sheep for the marriage feast. The bridegroom had no religion and so they were married at the *mairie*.

I am the next child, and then comes a girl of nine years,

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Georgine N'Denokueno, who lives at Pointe Noire now with my oldest sister. The policeman wanted her to live with them. She goes to the Swedish Mission School there.

Anne Kouyoulana comes next. She is six and goes to the Salvation Army School in Poto-Poto.

Last comes Paul Diamonika. He is a baby of two and is still on my mother's back.

Poto-Poto

There are thirty thousand natives living in Poto-Poto and probably about twenty thousand children among them. Almost as many natives live in the settlement of Bacongo, which is at the other end of the seven-mile-long street of Brazzaville. Poto-Poto, where I live, is north-east of Brazzaville and has many small houses in it. There is a great brick and concrete Catholic cathedral in the town. It was designed by a Protestant architect and is very unusual and very beautiful. There is also a Swedish mission and a Moslem mosque. The last is needed because there are many Arabs living in Poto-Poto.

My house, like most of the others, is made of mud. It was built by my father and has two small rooms and a corrugated iron roof. My father also built two other small houses beside the one we live in, both of which he rents out. Each of these houses has a straw ceiling and a dirt floor. In our house we all sleep on beds, which are made of solid wood without springs or mattresses, but covered with mats. These beds are in both rooms. We have a table and four chairs. When we eat we sit at the table except for my mother who sits on the floor. We Africans like to sit on the ground. There are many small stores in Poto-Poto, almost all of them owned by natives. There are six different native races that live in the village. I am a Bakongo.

Very few women among my people have a baby every one or two years. Often the women who are going to have

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babies and the women who are nursing their babies leave their husbands and go home to their own families until they have stopped nursing their children.

Some of the boys and girls wear *pagnes*, or big squares of cotton cloth, which they wrap around them. But that is because they have no other clothes. I wear shorts and blouses. I have shoes, but usually I do not wear them.

Mornings

Every day I get up at six. I light the fire, which is built among some rocks on the floor, and then go to the fountain three houses away to wash. Then I have breakfast, which is usually manioc, sometimes with tea. If we have tea then I have to go to the store to buy a few lumps of sugar. Sometimes we have *beignets*, which are doughnuts made of manioc, mixed with bananas, and fried in fat. I am very lucky, for many of the boys in my village never have any breakfast at all. Their families are too poor.

School begins at seven-thirty and is a ten-minute walk away. I go to the Salvation Army School. From seven-forty-five to eight we have prayers and hymns and scripture readings, led by the teachers. From eight to eleven-forty-five we have lessons with a break from nine-forty-five to ten. All the teaching is in French. We have reading, spelling, writing, dictation, French, grammar, and composition.

From eleven-forty-five to two-thirty I go home for lunch. My mother has the lunch ready when I arrive. We have manioc, meat or fish. We make a kind of stew or sauce out of tomatoes, onions, and *pili-pili*, which is very hot like pepper, and then we dip our manioc in it. We also eat a great deal of fruit, bananas, oranges, mangoes, papayas, and *safu*. The last looks like a plum and grows on a tree. It has to be boiled or cooked in the hot ashes of the fire, and is eaten with salt or sugar. My mother eats it with manioc. The water we drink is not boiled. After lunch I take some

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big bottles and go to the fountain to get water for my mother. I carry the water bottles on my head.

Afternoons and Evenings

The afternoon session is from two-thirty to four-thirty, with a recess from three-thirty to three-forty-five. We have an afternoon break, because it is so hot in this part of Africa. The Europeans do not have school in the afternoon at all. We study geography, the history of Africa and France, physiology, zoology, botany, hygiene, agriculture, writing, and drawing. On Thursday we have catechism and on Friday we have singing. We sing in four parts.

After school I go home, wash the dishes, sometimes with the help of others in the family. Sometimes I wash my own clothes. My father and the boys have to do the ironing, for this is not a woman's work. My mother does not know how to sew. When there are clothes to be made or mended, she takes them to the tailor in the village. Sewing is a man's job.

Many boys in my village have no families and have no one to take care of them. They have to do all their own cooking and washing.

After school I go out to play. I play 'foot', which is soccer, in our school team. I belong to the Boy Scouts, which we call in French *Eclaireurs*. This is an official organization and has the same programme, I am told, as the Scouts in England. Our Scouts meet three times a week.

At seven-thirty we have our supper, which is very much the same as our lunch. We have no homework to do except at week ends, when we have to learn some French poetry and also lessons that we have copied into our notebooks during the week. I go to bed at eight o'clock. There are three bars in the neighbourhood and dance halls, too, which are all very noisy. Sometimes, particularly at week ends, they make so much noise that we cannot sleep. The people of the village cannot leave at night without a pass.

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Saturday and Sunday

On Saturday I usually wash my clothes and on Sunday I go to the *Jeune Armée* (Young Army) service in the Salvation Army chapel from nine-thirty to ten-thirty. We are all divided into classes. On Saturday and Sunday afternoon I like to watch other teams play football in the big stadium beside the Catholic cathedral. On Saturday I often go fishing in the Congo River or in other small streams.

I play the flute, but I have had no lessons. I taught myself. Sometimes, but not often, I go to the cinema.

My Journeys

I have made two long trips. Once I went on the big steamer up the Congo River to the part of Africa we used to call Ubangi-Shari. Now it is the Central African Republic. It was during my holidays and it took me six days to get there. I went to visit my uncle who is a customs officer there. It was very exciting.

Another time I went in a truck to Boko in the country. This trip took me six hours. This is the village where my grandparents live.

Witch Doctors

My family still goes to witch doctors at times, and we children play witch doctors. Not long ago my family thought one of my uncles had been bewitched by a sorcerer. The uncle went to the white hospital first, but they could do nothing for him. Then he went to the witch doctor. The witch doctor put on a mask and a strange costume. Then he danced and sang and beat on a drum. Finally, he gave my uncle some kind of medicine to swallow and to rub on his body. The witch doctor said that if he cured him the family would have to pay fifteen thousand francs. If he did not cure him, the family would have to pay half that amount.

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My uncle was cured and so the witch doctor received the fifteen thousand francs.

Another time a young girl died in our neighbourhood and when her body was put into the coffin the witch doctor came and rapped on the coffin again and again, asking the girl who had bewitched her and killed her. The witch doctor finally said that the girl had told him it was one of my uncles. Soon after my uncle died. Perhaps he had been poisoned.

16. THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

THE FORMER BELGIAN CONGO

Diogo Cão Finds the Congo River

It was in 1482 that Diogo Cão discovered the mouth of the Congo River. He erected one of his marble crosses on the spot. Then he ascended the river until he found some of the natives. They were peaceful enough, but naturally, he could not talk their language. So he carried four of them back to Portugal with him. They were received by the king with great kindness. Finally, loaded with presents for the black king of their own country, they were taken home again.

This time Diogo Cão was received by the native monarch, who was seated on an ivory throne on a high platform. His cap was of palm leaves. From one shoulder hung a horse tail, which was the symbol of royalty.

The Portuguese explorer was welcomed by the king, but he could not get farther up the river, because of the many miles of rapids and waterfalls. So Cão sailed south again to the land that is now Angola. The upper reaches of the Congo continued to be an unknown land until Henry Morton Stanley made his amazing journey down the river almost four hundred years later.

THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The Extraordinary life of Henry Morton Stanley

His real name was John Rowlands and he was born in Wales in 1841. Later he became an American citizen, but finally he took back once more his British nationality. His childhood was one of wretched poverty and neglect. He was sent to a workhouse. At eighteen he ran away, signed up as a sailor on a ship, and set out for America. There, in New Orleans, he met a kindly merchant named Stanley. The merchant adopted the boy, and the boy took the name of his benefactor. Henceforth he was Henry Morton Stanley.

The Civil War came in America. Stanley fought on the side of the Confederacy. He was captured and imprisoned, but got out by volunteering to fight on the Union side. After the war came more years of adventure in many places: America, the Near East, Ethiopia, Tibet. Then came the great opportunity of his life. James Gordon Bennett, of the *New York Herald*, sent him off to Africa to find the missionary explorer, David Livingstone, who had disappeared there. On November 10, 1781, Stanley succeeded in finding Livingstone under a great mango tree at Ujiji on the shore of Lake Tanganyika. It was at this time that he wrote in his journal: 'I do not think I was made to be an African explorer, for I detest the land most heartily.' Then he spent four months with Livingstone, months that changed his whole attitude. Thereafter, the Africa that Stanley had so heartily detested became his very life.

Bula Matari

Having found Livingstone, he had to return to England, but three years later he was back in Africa determined to carry on the work of the great missionary, who had died meanwhile, on April 30, 1873, in a lonely place near Lake Bangweolo in the heart of Africa. There were long months of important explorations. Then marching west from Tanganyika he found himself on the banks of the Lualaba

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River. Livingstone had followed this river to the north for thirteen hundred miles, but had had to give up the journey because his porters refused to go on. Where did this river go? Was it the Nile or the Congo? Livingstone believed firmly that it was the Nile, but no one knew where it went or whence it came.

Should Stanley try to find its source first, or should he trace its course downstream? He and his companion, Frank Pocock, argued for days about it. Finally, they decided to toss a coin. Heads would mean going north, down the river. Tails would mean going south, up the river. They flipped the coin six times. Each time it came down tails. Then they tried again with short and long blades of grass. Each time the answer was the same—go south. But something seemed to push Stanley in the opposite direction. He issued the orders to march north, down the stream.

Had Stanley travelled south, as the coins and the grass-blades pointed, he would have reached the highlands of the Katanga region, with its enormous wealth of copper, zinc, lead, silver, uranium, and other metals.

The seven months that followed were terrible months. They passed through the country of fierce cannibal tribes, eager to welcome the white man to their cooking pot. The banks were often lined with yelling savages, hurling spears and shooting arrows. The explorers replied with rifle fire, sometimes visiting their anger on the natives by burning their villages.

They came to wild cataracts, around which they had to drag their dugouts. The natives began to call Stanley *Bula Matari*, which means the 'Breaker of Stones', because he often had to clear roads around the rapids. Then at last there came a moment of joy. They had passed the rapids. They were twenty miles north of the equator. The river now began to run westward! 'Aha,' said Stanley to himself, 'it is not the Nile. It must be the Congo.'

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They were able now to travel more comfortably downstream in the *Lady Alice*, the collapsible boat they had brought along with them. Finally, they reached the broad basin between the present cities of Brazzaville and Léopoldville, which we now call Stanley Pool. They asked a friendly chief what the name of the river was. The chief replied, *Ikuta ya Kongo*, 'It is called the Congo.'

There were still long miles of turbulent waters between the pool and the sea, but the mystery of the Congo had been solved. This was Africa's last great geographical riddle.

The 'River Seekers'

Stanley had turned north on the Lualaba, which was the upper length of the Congo, because instinctively he knew that it was more important to find out where this great river went than where it came from. He did not want to be called a 'river seeker', which was the nickname people had given Livingstone.

Six years afterwards, however, a German explorer, Paul Reichenow, travelled south to the Katanga region and found there the greatest mineral deposits in the whole world. His country made no move to claim them, but in the early 1890's both the Belgians and the British sent out expeditions to annex the area. The Belgians got there first.

The Congo Free State

When Stanley got back to Europe in 1878 he was met by a representative of King Leopold II of Belgium, who offered him a job in Africa. So the explorer went back again to the Congo and for the next four years he worked there, signing treaties with the chiefs and building a private empire for the king. The country became known as the Congo Free State and the king became one of the world's wealthiest men, because of the rubber and ivory he got from it. There were many cruelties, however, in the administration of the

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country, and the conscience of the world protested against what it called the 'red rubber' horrors. Finally, the free state was turned over to the Belgian nation to become a rich crown colony.

The Republic of the Congo

In the late 1950's there was a native uprising in Léopoldville. The Belgian government began to realize that they could no longer hold on to their great colony. Freedom, like a great tidal wave, was rushing onward over the continent of Africa, and now it had reached the frontiers of the Belgian Congo. Suddenly, all too suddenly, on June 30, 1960, the Belgian government granted full independence to this great but primitive land.

Then chaos followed freedom. The country began to fall apart. There was strife everywhere. Hundreds of whites were killed. African leaders were assassinated. One tribe fought against another. Finally, the United Nations was called in to restore order. But the bitter rivalry of the Africans, the savage fighting in many parts of the land, and the weakness of the United Nations, divided within itself, have made the solution of the problem exceedingly difficult.

Our young people come from the two ends of the country. Marie Ntela is from a little jungle village in the region of the Congo, downstream from Léopoldville. Joseph Thomas is from the south-east. He knows what the present trouble in the land means. His mother was killed in the fighting.

I WAS BORN IN THE BUSH

BY MARIE NTELA

The Village of Kimbanseke

My name is Marie Ntela and I was born at Kimbanseke, a little bush village near the Congo River. I lived there for only one year, and, of course, I do not remember it from those early days, but I have been back a good many times since and can describe it very well. The village is about twenty miles from Léopoldville, the capital of the Republic of the Congo, in the direction of Matadi, which is down stream from Léopoldville. Ocean steamers can come up the Congo River as far as Matadi, but they cannot go as far as Léopoldville, because of the river rapids. The little village where I was born can be reached only by road. You have to cross a river also to get there.

There were only about one hundred people in the town at that time, including some fifty children. There was one little church and nearby was a small school for two classes. The school and the church were run by the Salvation Army. My father was a teacher in the school when I was born.

We had mud houses, rectangular in shape, with thatched roofs, and in my house we had two rooms for the family and one room for my father to work in. We had tables and chairs and bamboo beds. In a little hut outside the house we cooked our meals over a wood fire in a fireplace made of stones. The walls of this kitchen were made of sticks and did not reach to the roof. They were not covered with mud and it was easy for the smoke to escape. All the houses in the

I WAS BORN IN THE BUSH

village were built in rows with the church and the school in the middle.

Wild animals were everywhere: monkeys, antelopes, wild buffaloes, and snakes, even the big boas. Sometimes the children were bitten by the snakes, and I know of one child who died. We had no doctor in the village. In case of trouble you could get a doctor only by driving for a whole hour to another town.

The people in the village hunted and fished and raised vegetables in their gardens, which they took to Léopoldville to sell. They had mangoes to eat, and bananas, pineapples, lemons, grapefruit, and *safu*, a little wild fruit which grows on high trees, which they boiled and ate. They also had peanuts, sweet potatoes, and a root called manioc.

I belong to the Molemfu clan, which is part of the Baongo tribe. These people live mostly in the country between Léopoldville and Matadi. They have many languages, and I speak Lingala, Kicongo, and also French, which I have learned at school. We Africans do not usually marry outside our tribe, and if I get married it will probably be to one of the Baongo boys.

We have no Family Names

My father's name is Simon Dimvula and my mother's name is Minkengi Julienne. I am the oldest child and I have two brothers and two sisters. Next to me is Mabuva Gabrielle, a girl of eleven. Then comes Nsendi Patrice, a boy of eight. Then Makumbu Regine, a girl of six. Last is the baby, a boy ten months old, called Dimvula Etienne. As you see, all the names are different. Among our people we have no family names.

My Father became a Salvation Army Officer

When I was one year old, my father went to Léopoldville to the Salvation Army Training School, so he could become

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a Salvation Army officer. I went with him and lived there for about a year in the training garrison. When he graduated he became a cadet lieutenant and was sent to Manyanza, which is a village even smaller than Kimbanseke. It has about fifty people and is not far from Léopoldville. I went with him, of course.

When I was about four, my father was sent to Brazzaville, the capital of what was then French Equatorial Africa, for the Salvation Army worked in that country, too. Brazzaville is just across the Congo River from Léopoldville. It takes about fifteen minutes in a steamer to cross Stanley Pool, which is always full of little floating islands of water hyacinths or other plants hurrying downstream to the rapids. I did not go with my father this time, but stayed with my grandparents at Kimuenza. I was there until I was seven. Kimuenza was a much bigger village, with about five hundred people in it, on the railway between Léopoldville and Matadi. When I was five I began to go to school at Kimuenza, but when I was seven my father was sent to a church at Kana on the Congo River. So I went to school there for two years.

School at Léopoldville

When I was nine years old, I left my family so I could go to school in Léopoldville. Captain Beney, of the Salvation Army, took me into her house, and I have lived there ever since. My father has moved to other villages, but when we have holidays I am able to visit my family.

Every day I am up at five-thirty and after I wash and dress I get the breakfast, for my work in the house is to do all the cooking. There are four native girls living in the captain's house, and each of us has her chores to do. At six-thirty we have breakfast. Then we have family prayers. The two older girls take turns reading the Bible. Then I walk to the Salvation Army headquarters where I am driven to school

I WAS BORN IN THE BUSH

in a car. The drive takes a quarter of an hour. The primary school, where I go, is on the Avenue Kabinda, and nine hundred girls study there. School lasts from eight until eleven-thirty, when I go home to cook lunch for the family. In the afternoon the small girls return to school from two-thirty to four-thirty, but I have to stay until five-fifteen.

The morning session begins with prayers at eight. Then we have religion until eight-thirty. After that we study arithmetic and reading until ten. Then we have dictation and grammar, sometimes French grammar and sometimes Lingala grammar.

In the afternoon the studies are not always the same. We have hygiene, manners, observation, drawing, singing, writing, and geography. We also discuss ethics. I think I like hygiene best. On Friday and Saturday we have no school. I am now in the fourth form.

At five-fifteen I go home to cook the supper, which we eat at six-thirty. I prepare all kinds of dishes, and Captain Beney says I am a good cook. We have mostly European dishes, for most of the Salvation Army officers come from Belgium and like this kind of food. I think I like to cook macaroni best, which we eat with tomatoes or meat. Another girl washes the dishes.

After supper we read the Scriptures and have prayers. Then I can play or study or do what I please. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday afternoons I usually go outside to play. I do not play in any team, but I do dance and sing with the other girls. I usually go to bed at eight or eight-thirty.

On Sunday I leave the house at seven o'clock and walk with four or five other girls to Sunday school. This lasts from eight to ten, and is held in the schoolhouse. We have different classes. There is one European teacher and the rest are native teachers. Then after Sunday school comes a meeting of the Girl Guides, to which I belong.

On Sunday night I go to the French church.

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I do not play any musical instrument and I never go to the cinema. Captain Beney does not think they are good for me to see. I always wear European clothing, but when I get older I shall probably wear native clothes with the long cotton skirts whenever I go back to the bush villages.

Our Christmas Pageant

At Christmas time we always have a big pageant and last year I was one of the angels. Twice a year we have a big meeting called a *matongu*. It comes in October and May. The natives bring gifts of fruit and money in gratitude to God. We have singing and gymnastic exhibitions and everyone has a good time. I like it very much. Then we always have a big meeting when important visitors from Europe come.

MY MOTHER WAS KILLED BY THE BALUBA

BY JOSEPH THOMAS

My First Four Years

THE first four years of my life I spent in Jadotville, where I was born on December 12, 1946. I do not remember much about my life there, except that I had to fetch water for the family.

My father's name was Ignace Thomas. He was born in Angola, and he is a forester. People hire him to plant trees on their plantations. My mother, Marie Julia, also came from Angola.

I have a brother of eighteen, whose name is Taurent. He

MY MOTHER WAS KILLED BY THE BALUBA

goes to a school at Albertville on the shores of Lake Tanganyika. Then I have a sister, Mathe Chamville, who is nine. She is a student at the Institut Marie José in Elisabethville, which is just beside the school I now go to.

Kolwezi and Albertville

When I was four, my father got another job at Kolwezi in the province of Kasai. They now call this part of the province the Independent State of South Kasai. We were there for three years. I began to go to school then at the mission of the Franciscan brothers.

In 1954 we went to Albertville. That is a lovely city that runs right along the shores of Lake Tanganyika. I was there until 1960, and I celebrated our Independence Day, June 30, 1960, at the school. The school buildings were only about a thousand feet away from the lake. I often used to take a dugout and go fishing. I used a line, with worms for bait. My school there was run by the White fathers. I lived with my family near the mission.

My Mother was Killed

That same year of 1960 the family went to Mukulakulu, which is about 250 miles north-west of Elisabethville. My father had been transferred there. At the beginning of September I started in school at Luena, which is about seven miles away. I was a boarder there. Every Saturday I rode home on my bicycle, and then returned to school on Sunday afternoon.

We were there only a little while when the Baluba attacked the little village of Mukulakulu. The Baluba are a very important group of tribes. The name means the Luba people. You find different tribes of this group all over the Congo. There are a great many of them in Katanga Province and a great many in Kasai Province also. They are always fighting with other tribes over politics.

THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

When the Baluba attacked my village my father was at work and I was at school. When we got home we found that many of the men had been killed and two of the women. One of the women was my mother. She had been killed near our house.

After that all the people that were left at Mukulakulu packed up and moved to Elisabethville. We moved, too.

In School at Elisabethville

I am now going to the Collège Saint François de Sales. We have a thousand boys there. I am in the fifth year, taking French, arithmetic, history, geography, science, drawing, and gymnastics. My father is working about five miles away. He leaves for his job on a bicycle at five and comes home at three in the afternoon. We have a modern brick house in the city with four rooms and bath.

I get up at seven and prepare the breakfast. Since my mother was killed I have had to cook for the family. I have only my sister Mathe and myself to get breakfast and lunch for, but my father is back for dinner at night. For breakfast we have bread, butter, cheese, and tea.

After breakfast I leave for school. Our classes begin at eight-thirty and end at eleven-forty-five, and there are classes from two to four in the afternoon. For lunch I serve meat with rice and fruit like papayas and oranges. We drink water. For dinner at night we have soup, eggs, meat and rice, with water to drink. I usually have homework for about an hour in the evening. We have no radio and I never play any games either indoors or out after school except at the week end. I go to bed at about seven-thirty.

There is no school on Saturday afternoon, and I often go out then to play football. Once in a while I go to the cinema with my father. It costs me ten francs. Sometimes we have films at the college, too.

I am a Catholic and on Sunday I go to mass in the

MY MOTHER WAS KILLED BY THE BALUBA

morning at nine. It is a church in the city, but I do not know its name.

It is dangerous to travel now

We have a holiday in July and August, but I stay at home most of the time, because of the fighting in the country. Not long ago the Baluba, who killed my mother, ambushed and killed about eight Irish soldiers of the United Nations. They killed them with arrows. They say they thought they were Belgian soldiers attached to the army of Mr. Tshombe, the president of the new republic of Katanga. Things like this are happening all the time now.

When the worst of the troubles came the buildings of my college were filled with Belgian families. There were hundreds of people in them, men, women, and children, all guarded by soldiers. The streets were blocked off with trucks, and people could hear shooting everywhere. Many of the Belgian teachers left the country at that time for their homeland, but they are now coming back again. Soon we will have all the teachers we need.

I would like to be a mechanic later on. I speak French, Portuguese, and Kiswahili. My parents both came from Angola, and so we spoke Portuguese at home. In Kiswahili *jambo* means 'good morning'. When I meet one of the Salesian fathers at my school I say to him *Jambo, mon père*. That is a mixture of Kiswahili and French. In Kiswahili, which is spoken all over East Africa, *kwaheri* means good-bye.

17. ANGOLA

THE CINDERELLA COUNTRY

Diogo Cão again

THE marble pillar that Cão set up in 1482 to mark the discovery of the Congo River was in the land we now call Angola. This country is bounded on the north for a short distance by the river. On the opposite bank the Republic of the Congo stretches a stubby finger down to the sea, and to the north is another small bit of Portuguese territory called Cabinda. Cabinda is completely separated from the rest of Angola.

The river Cão discovered was called Nzadi by the natives of the land. The Portuguese changed this to Zahira, and they still call the Congo the Zaire. After the great explorer had returned to their homeland the four black men he had taken to Lisbon with him, he continued his explorations down along the coast of Africa as far as South West Africa. Then, you remember, he disappeared from the pages of history.

After Cão the priests and the merchants began to come to Angola. Portugal also sent plants she had imported from South America: peas, beans, maize, sweet potatoes, manioc, tomatoes, onions, peppers, bananas, oranges, lemons, tobacco, and cocoa. They sent the cat and the dog and the pig, too. These plants and animals were perhaps Portugal's greatest contribution to Africa.

THE CINDERELLA COUNTRY

The country itself, which is now Portugal's largest overseas province, was not christened with a Portuguese name like Gabon. It got its name from one of the old native kings, who was called N'Gola.

Following these early years of discovery and settlement the sleepy centuries came and went.

The Mother of Brazil

Angola was the last centre of the West African slave trade. The slaves were baptized before they were shipped overseas. That, to many people, made the business a Christian enterprise. In about fifty years, six hundred thousand of these poor unfortunates were sent to Brazil alone. This is why Angola is sometimes called the 'Mother of Brazil'. It was during this period of the thriving slave trade that another great explorer ventured into Angola from the east.

Livingstone, the River Seeker

In the preceding chapter of our book we told of the death of David Livingstone. We must now retrace our steps and speak of Livingstone's early years.

He was a Scot like so many others of these African explorers, born near Glasgow at Blantyre, in 1813. While still in his teens he decided to become a medical missionary. Early in 1841, having completed his studies, he was sent out to South Africa. There he met and married the daughter of another missionary, Dr. Robert Moffat. He began to set up mission stations and to minister to the sick, but his real interest was in exploration. He was the first white man to see Lake Ngami in what is now Bechuanaland, and to hear of a region still farther north full of great rivers and gigantic forests. The natives told him also of a big stream that lay to the north-east, which they called the Zambezi. Livingstone made up his mind he would find out about this river. Was it the same river that flowed into the Indian Ocean far off

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to the east? Did it belong to the Congo or the Nile? In what direction did it flow? Where was its source?

In June, 1851, Livingstone had reached the river. At that point it was two thousand feet wide, but the maps did not show it at all.

Probably it was just then that Livingstone said good-bye to his work as a medical missionary. He decided to ascend the Zambezi River, hoping to find a way to the ocean in the west. The friendly tribe of Makololo promised to help and provided dugouts and twenty-seven paddlers. In November, 1853, Livingstone started off.

It was another of those frightful journeys we have been describing in this book. Not even today in this jungle are there any roads. He passed through northern Rhodesia and the southern part of the Congo basin, until at last he had reached Portuguese territory. Not sickness, nor hunger, nor exhaustion, nor the hostility of native peoples could stop him. On May 31, 1854, he arrived at the old Portuguese port of Loanda.

The Makololo with him were amazed when they first saw the Atlantic. 'We believed that what the ancients had always told us was true,' they said, 'that the world had no end, but all at once the world said, "I am finished, there is no more of me!"' When they first saw a Portuguese house they said, 'It is not a hut; it is a mountain with several caves in it!'

Livingstone stayed at Loanda for four months, and then travelled for another eight months back to the land of Makololo. The *picho*, or assembly, was so enthusiastic about the result of this journey that it suggested he made another journey to the east to see which route to the ocean was the better. So Livingstone started off again, this time to the Indian Ocean. He was the first white man to cross Africa from coast to coast in either direction. But this second epoch-making journey belongs in our next book, *Young People of East and South Africa*.

MY HOME IS LOANDA

Cinderella

After slavery was abolished Portugal used to send its convicts with their families to Angola. The people of the motherland were not proud of the place. One Portuguese visitor went back to Lisbon to say, 'Half the people of the colony are in prison, and the other half ought to be.' The land was poor, neglected, forgotten, a Cinderella country.

Then suddenly extraordinary changes began to occur. During World War II coffee and sisal became very important. Diamond fields were opened on the borders of the Congo. The wretched Cinderella slipped her feet into her glass slippers and became the richest daughter in the Portuguese family.

It is to this country that José Eduardo dos Santos belongs. He is a Negro, but you will see that he is breaking the ties with his own people and more and more thinking of himself as a Portuguese.

MY HOME IS LOANDA

BY JOSÉ EDUARDO DOS SANTOS

I live on the edge of the City

My name is José Eduardo dos Santos, and I was born in Muçequê Caiate, which is an African settlement on the edge of Loanda, the principal city of Angola. There are about one hundred and thirty thousand people living in and around Loanda, and Muçequê Caiate is one of the biggest of their settlements. It has about ten thousand people. It is just north of Loanda and is not right on the Atlantic Ocean but on flat land, inland.

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Like most of the houses in Muceque Caiate my house has walls made of sticks covered with mud and the roof is thatched with straw. The house is not round but rectangular in shape and it has two rooms in it. We have one table and six chairs, but we all sleep on straw mats on the earth floor. There is a big Catholic church in the village and a big school run by the government where most of the children go. But I go to school in Loanda.

My Father is a Mason

My father's name is Eduardo Avelino dos Santos, and he is a mason working for the ministry of public works. He works mostly with concrete rather than with stone and bricks. My mother's name is Jacinto José Paulino. I have four brothers and one sister.

My oldest brother is Avelino Eduardo dos Santos. He is a carpenter twenty-six years old. My next brother is Inocencia Eduardo dos Santos. He is twenty and is learning to be a mason.

Then I come, and after me my brother Lucrecio Eduardo dos Santes. He is eleven and is now in a mission school. Then there is Luiz, a boy of eight, who goes to a small private school, where my father pays fifteen angolares a month for his teaching. The money we use in Angola is named after the country itself. An angolar is worth slightly over threepence, so that my father pays about four shillings a month for Luiz' teaching.

The youngest in the family is Marta, the only girl. She is five years old.

I do not know my tribe

The Africans in Loanda are trying to live like Europeans and they do not know very much about the African tribes from which they come. Most of the Africans in my village probably come from the Cazenga tribe, but many of them

MY HOME IS LOANDA

no longer know their tribes. I do not know myself what tribe I come from. The only language I speak is Portuguese, but I understand the native language called Kimbundo.

Loanda is a beautiful City

I think Loanda is a very wonderful city. The harbour is formed by sand bars that lie off the coast. Without these sand bars there would be no harbour at all, but only an open coastline. One of these sand bars is so large that there are many houses and restaurants on it, another connected with the first has a big African village on it, around a Catholic church. They build many small ships there also. A bridge leads from the mainland over to the first island and then you can walk along the sand bar to the African village. Last January there was a terrible storm which broke over the sand bar, washed away concrete walls, and did a great deal of damage. It even threatened to destroy the harbour, but they are now making the bar a great deal higher and stronger with earth and huge rocks. I like to walk over the bridge to the first island which is called the Ilha de Loanda (Loanda Island). They sell seashells there as souvenirs, but they used to use these seashells as money in the early days of the country.

Sometimes I walk up the hill to the great yellow castle that stands there, the castle of São Miguel, which is very ancient. It has little circular sentry boxes at the corners. At first it was a real fortress, then it was a prison, now it is a museum. You get lovely views of Loanda and the sand bars from the castle walls, where the old muzzle-loading cannon still stands.

The city itself has many houses with white, yellow, blue, tan, green, pink walls, but all the houses have red-tiled roofs. We have many fine streets, big schools, nice stores, and good hotels. About fifteen thousand white people live in the city.

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My Day at the Evangelical Mission

The primary school to which I go is run by the Evangelical Mission in Loanda. This is the main school, but the mission has five other small schools in different communities around Loanda. In my school there are 365 pupils, about 120 of which are girls. It is divided into four grades. The pupils in the first and second grades go to school only in the afternoon. The pupils in the third and fourth grades go in both morning and afternoon. I am in the fourth grade. This is probably my last year in school, as I may not have the money to study any more.

I usually get up at six and then I wash and dress. I always wear shorts and shirts. My breakfast at six-thirty is a cup of coffee or tea and a piece of bread. Sometimes I wash my clothes and clean the house after breakfast and sometimes I run errands. There are small stores in the settlement, run by the white people.

I start to walk to school at seven-thirty. It takes about half an hour to get there and school begins at eight. It lasts until eleven-thirty with a break from nine-thirty to nine-forty-five, when we play games in the yard. Some of the children bring things to eat and I always have a piece of bread with me. On Friday we have a religious service from nine-thirty to nine-fifty and the break comes from nine-fifty to ten.

At eleven-thirty I go home to lunch. We usually have fresh fish with manioc. Sometimes we have meat and rice, but we very seldom have any fruit except the big bananas that we cook. On the street we sometimes buy bananas or oranges. We cook in palm oil which comes from the palm-tree nuts. We have water to drink. Then before we go back to school again I rest or play a little.

The afternoon session is from two-thirty to five without a break, and at five I go home. Then I help my mother about the house, run errands for her, and play with the boys. We have supper at eight. We eat about the same kinds of food

MY HOME IS LOANDA

that we have at noon, but sometimes we have *pirão*, which is a dish that natives like, a kind of stew made with water and palm oil and manioc. We also sprinkle *jiudungo* on our food very often. This a kind of seed like pepper which burns the throat when you eat it. I like it very much and some of the Europeans like it, too.

After supper I study, and when I am sleepy I go to bed. This is usually about ten.

Studies and Sports

My studies at school are not the same every day. On Monday and Wednesday we have dictation, history of Portugal, and mathematics in the morning. In the afternoon we have the geography of Portugal and its territories and also the Portuguese language. On Tuesday and Thursday we have mathematics, composition on different subjects, and dictation. In the morning and in the afternoon we have physiology, Portuguese, and penmanship. On Friday we have drawing, and on Saturday we have no school.

At school we play basketball and volleyball, and outside I play soccer with the other boys. We also play a game like marbles with four holes in the ground and ball bearings to roll. In the afternoon when there is no school I like to see soccer matches played by other teams. Sometimes I go swimming, for there are no sharks near our coast, but I do not fish. I never go on picnics or for long walks and I do not play any musical instrument. Sometimes I go to the cinema and I like to read comics and children's stories. But we never have concerts or plays.

I should like to be a nurse when I grow up, but I am not sure if I can do this, because my family has no money to keep me in school.

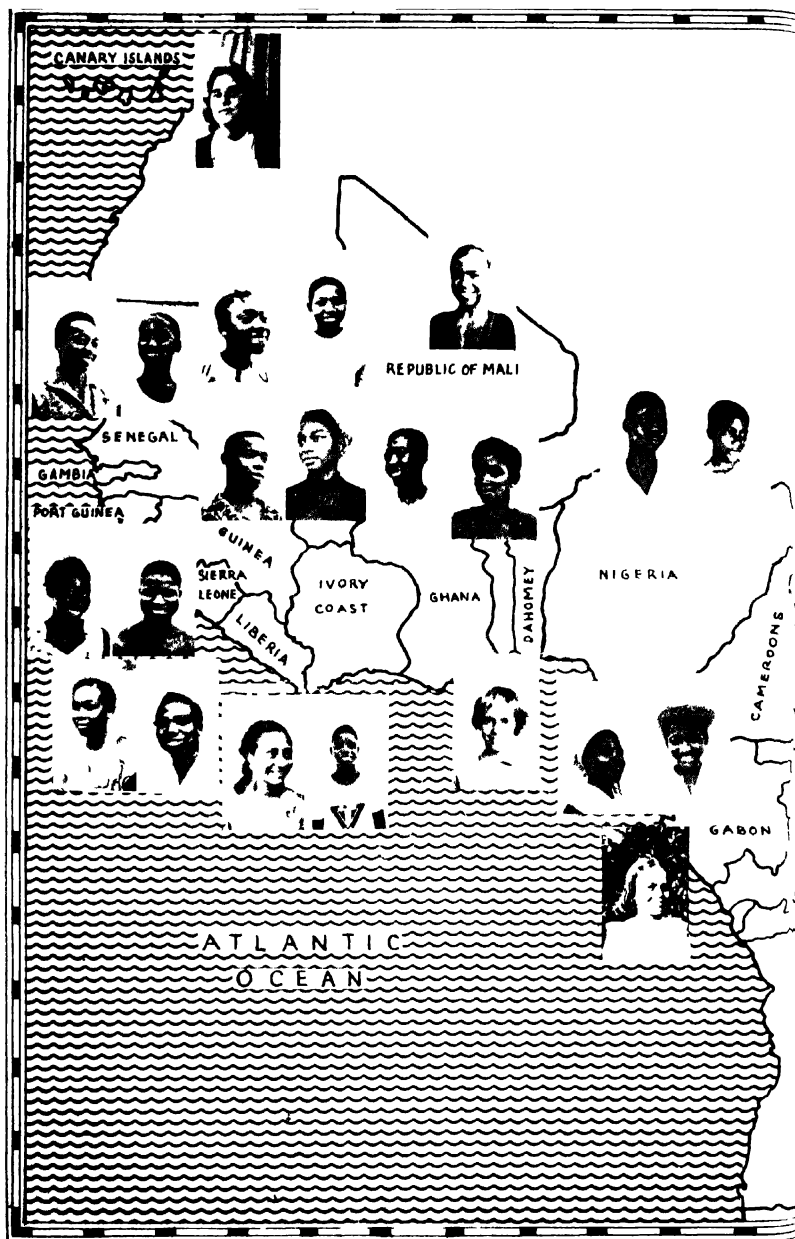
Our Religion and our Festivals

My family is divided in religion. My father is a Catholic

ANGOLA

and my mother is a Protestant. Inocencia, the second oldest of the children, is a Catholic. The rest of the children are Protestants. On Sunday I go to the nine o'clock service in the main Protestant church in Loanda. The service lasts from nine till eleven. I am free the rest of the day.

At Christmas we always have a pageant in the mission. We have the usual Portuguese holidays, much like those they have in the other great African Portuguese province. On the nineteenth of February every year we have a great carnival when the natives dress up and parade through the streets. They dance and sing and play on drums and musical instruments and have a wonderful time. Protestants are not supposed to take part in this festival, but we love to watch it.



Young People of West Africa

CANARY ISLANDS

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SENEGAL

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THE GAMBIA

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CAPTAIN MUMBA VICTORIA ETHIOPIANS

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REPUBLIC OF GUINEA

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REPUBLIC OF MALI

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SIERRA LEONE

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REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

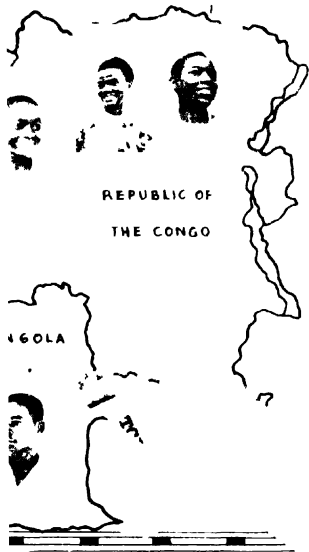
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